OXFORD

MYSTICAL ENCOUNTERS *with the* NATURAL WORLD

Experiences & Explanations

PAUL MARSHALL

Mystical Encounters with the Natural World

This page intentionally left blank

Mystical Encounters with the Natural World

Experiences and Explanations

PAUL MARSHALL

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in

Oxford New York

Auckland Cape Town Dar es Salaam Hong Kong Karachi Kuala Lumpur
Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Nairobi New Delhi Shanghai Taipei Toronto

With offices in

Argentina Austria Brazil Chile Czech Republic France Greece
Guatemala Hungary Italy Japan Poland Portugal Singapore
South Korea Switzerland Thailand Turkey Ukraine Vietnam

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press
in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in the United States
by Oxford University Press Inc., New York

First published 2005

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Data available

Typeset by SPI Publishers Services, Pondicherry, India
Printed in Great Britain by
Biddles Ltd., King's Lynn, Norfolk

ISBN 0–19–927943–8 978–0–19–927943–2

1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

How can the whole world become visible to a single man?

Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*

This page intentionally left blank

Preface and Acknowledgements

The present study is devoted to mystical experiences of the natural world and the disparate ways in which they have been explained. Typically, these so-called *extrovertive mystical experiences* are characterized by some combination of unity, deepened knowledge, sense of reality, altered time-experience, light, bliss, and love. The experiences are well represented in modern collections of spiritual testimonies, but unlike some other extraordinary experiences, they have received little sustained attention in recent years. As a step towards redressing the neglect, I look at the experiences again—at their circumstances, characteristics, and consequences—and scrutinize a variety of explanations put forward over the last hundred years.

Why is renewed study of extrovertive mystical experiences desirable? Apart from their significance as life-transforming events, the experiences are of considerable theoretical interest. They have been important in the modern study of mysticism, constituting one of the major types of mystical experience recognized by scholars since the early days of study, and they promise to be important in the future development of the field. Any theory of mystical experience with pretensions to generality must be able to account for extrovertive experiences. The experiences provide an important test case for evaluating explanations, including the currently fashionable approaches that trace mystical experience to neuropsychology or to the conditioning influence of religious belief and practice. Extrovertive experience is also of interest for the stimulus it could give to the study of mind: the immense expansions of perception and cognition reported in some accounts raise questions about the nature of the perceptual process and the relation between mind and world. Are there non-sensory forms of contact with the world? Does mind exist beyond the brain?

Extrovertive mystical experience is also important in ways that are tangential to the present study but which are worth noting to underscore the potential benefits of a more sophisticated understanding of

the experiences. By bringing together spirituality and the natural world, the experiences have a bearing on several topics, such as nature religions, spiritual ecologies, nature aesthetics, science–religion relations, and writings in which nature and spirituality interfuse, including Romantic literature. It is perhaps surprising that extrovertive experience has received little attention in recent years, given the return of nature as an object of interest in religious and environmental movements that call for the veneration or 'resacralization' of the natural world.

Mystical Encounters with the Natural World is based on my doctoral work at the Department of Religious Studies, Lancaster University, which was made possible by financial support from the Arts and Humanities Research Board. I am greatly indebted to Robert Segal for his encouragement and insightful feedback throughout the years of research, and to Patrick Sherry, Paul Fletcher, Gavin Hyman, and Peter Moore for their helpful comments. Many thanks to those who kindly responded to requests for information or provided assistance in other ways: Peter Connolly, Gordon Heald, Emily Williams Kelly, Irene and Les Lancaster, Roderick Main, Michael Medley, Peggy Morgan, John O'Neill, Ondine Park, Alex Ryan, Karen Selway, Timothy Sprigge, and Gillian Taylor. My gratitude goes to all those at Oxford University Press involved in publishing the book, especially Lucy Qureshi, Editor for Religion, and the experts consulted by the Press. Their invaluable suggestions have added greatly to the book. Special thanks go to the 'nature mystics' who have made their personal experiences available for study, and to my parents, sister, and oft-neglected friends, who have contributed in ways too numerous to recount.

I am grateful to the Alister Hardy Society and the Religious Experience Research Centre at the University of Wales, Lampeter, for permission to quote from their extensive archive of spiritual testimonies. The present study has benefited considerably from data made available by the Centre in several publications, particularly the anthology *Seeing the Invisible*, edited by Meg Maxwell and Verena Tschudin (1996). Permission to quote from *Seeing the Invisible* was kindly granted by Verena Tschudin. Accounts from the Religious Experience Research Centre collection are indicated here by the abbreviation 'RERC' followed by the official archive number, if known, and the publication reference.

The author would also like to thank the following for permission to reproduce published material: extract from 'A spiritual biog-

raphy', *De Numine*, 28: 14–17, by John Franklin (copyright 2000), reproduced by permission of John Franklin; extract from *Light of All Life* by Raynor C. Johnson (copyright 1984), reproduced by permission of Pilgrims Book Services; extracts from *Watcher on the Hills* by Raynor C. Johnson (copyright 1959), reproduced by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Limited.

P.M.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

This page intentionally left blank

Introduction

I was sitting in the dentist's chair waiting for the dentist to examine my teeth. I was alone and looking out of the window. It was a dull, overcast day, but suddenly the sun came out—golden and glorious. This was not the physical sun, but a wonderful golden light. With it came a feeling of great joy, peace and well-being. I was so full of love for all things that I felt my heart would burst, and such a feeling of Unity. (RERC 4384, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 113–14)

It sometimes happens that the world appears very different from usual. Things that were separate are now unified. Knowledge and love, ordinarily feeble and partial, become deep and all-encompassing. Self melts away in peace, bliss, light. The present embraces past and future. These experiences, which can vary considerably in details, often occur under the stimulus of beautiful scenery or come at times of great mental tension, but they also arise in the most prosaic of circumstances. Experiences of the transfigured world, sometimes called 'extrovertive mystical experiences' or 'nature mystical experiences', are more common than may be supposed, at least in their milder forms, and for over a century they have been recognized by scholars of mysticism.

There has, however, been little in-depth work on the topic since the 1950s and 1960s, when the comparative religionist R. C. Zaehner and the philosopher W. T. Stace discussed the experiences in their influential books on mysticism. Renewed scrutiny is long overdue, not least because the experiences and their interpretation were poorly served by the classic studies, which, in any case, have become rather dated. Important developments have taken place since the 1960s. Through the data-gathering efforts of Alister Hardy and other investigators of spiritual experiences, there are now many more accounts of extrovertive mystical experience available for study, and there can no longer be any excuse for the neglect of empirical data that has blighted many studies of mystical experience. Additionally, important theoretical perspectives have gained

prominence in recent decades. In particular, it has become popular to maintain that mystical experiences are thoroughly conditioned by the religious traditions in which they occur. Mystical experiences, it is asserted, are products of religious indoctrination and training. At first sight, the claim seems inappropriate for extrovertive mystical experiences: in modern times, the experiences often occur spontaneously, outside any tradition of religious doctrine and practice, and it is therefore not immediately apparent that they are products of religious conditioning. Clearly, the matter needs attention. Likewise, speculations about the neuropsychological basis of mystical experience have been growing in recent years, and the relevance of these speculations to extrovertive experience needs to be gauged. The time is ripe for a fresh look at the various ways in which extrovertive mystical experience has been explained.

The Experiences

When appraising explanations, it is important to have a sense of the phenomenon that is to be explained. The first part of the book is therefore given over to the experiences themselves. What are extrovertive mystical experiences like? How common are they? In what circumstances do they occur? What effects do they have? In what sense are they 'mystical', and what makes them 'extrovertive'? It is all too easy to become bogged down in the intricacies of nomenclature and definition, but the matter needs some attention, and in Chapter 1 I attempt to mark out the territory without becoming embroiled in the debates that swirl round those slippery, contested terms 'mysticism' and 'mystical'. In brief, extrovertive experiences can be called 'mystical' because they tend to be characterized by one or more of the following: profound sense of *unity*, profound sense of *knowledge*, profound sense of *contact with reality*. Modern scholars have commonly taken these features to be defining characteristics of mystical experience, and so there is some excuse for calling extrovertive experiences 'mystical'. As for the 'extrovertive' label, the experiences are distinguished from other mystical experiences by their *orientation towards the natural world*. In extrovertive experiences, the mystical features—unity, knowledge, reality, love, luminosity, and so forth—characterize experience of the natural world, not experience of something completely beyond the natural world, such as a transcendent god, self, soul, or realm. Hence, the

experience recounted in the following passage can be called 'mystical' because there was a profound sense of unity, and it can be called 'extrovertive' because the unity involved the natural world:

> It was a beautiful sunny day, and I began looking at the hills which I could see from my window. What followed is almost impossible to express in words, but my whole mode of perception and my whole being suddenly altered. For what I think was a brief instant, though it seemed to last for a long time, I seemed to be 'at one' with the hills, to be identified with them, to belong to them. My whole being was absorbed in this feeling, which was of great intensity . . . Then the 'focus' altered, and I was looking at the hills normally again, but feeling very startled at what had happened. I puzzled over it for weeks. (RERC 357, in Beardsworth 1977: 51–2)

For the purpose of defining extrovertive mystical experience, the term 'natural world' is not without complications because there is room for debate over what the natural world includes and excludes. Still, it is probably more important to give a living sense of the experiences at this stage than to aim at a cast-iron definition. Thus, in Chapter 1, steps are taken to give the reader a sense of the experiences through some extrovertive accounts and an overview of common or notable features. The discussion of characteristics is taken further in Chapter 2: scholarly attempts to identify extrovertive characteristics are considered, and the results of my own work in the area are presented. In Chapter 3, the focus switches to circumstances and consequences. Again, examples are given, and, by the end of Part I, the reader should have gained a fair sense of the experiences.

A study that dwells so much on mystical experience is liable to be accused of giving disproportionate attention to special, intense experiences. William James has long been criticized for privileging exceptional experiences over the commonplace aspects of religious life, and scholars have continued to take issue with the prominence given to intense, private experience in the study of religion and mysticism.[1] The emphasis on experience is said to be anachronistic: it is claimed that in pre-modern times, intense experiences were not highly esteemed, neither for their spiritual contributions to the religious life nor for their evidential value in support of religious faith. Typically, the modern preoccupation with experience is traced

[1] Wulff (1997: 499–503) summarizes the critical responses to James. For recent criticisms of the experiential emphasis, see Proudfoot (1985), Lash (1988), Jantzen (1995), Turner (1995), Sharf (1998), and Ferrer (2000).

to Friedrich Schleiermacher and his intellectual heirs, including James, who are said to have retreated to private religious experience as a defence against Enlightenment threats to religion. The thesis strikes me as an oversimplification, but whatever its merits or defects, it is not of direct relevance to the present study because I make no dogmatic claims about the significance of extrovertive experience in earlier periods. In Chapter 1, I do note some historical cases and raise some traditional religious philosophies that may have been inspired by extrovertive experiences, but my conclusions are tentative. For the most part, the cases raised in the study are drawn from modern times, and my focus on intense experiences and their explanation mirrors the importance often given to the experiences by those who have them and their urge to understand them. In the modern world, intense spiritual experiences do take place, do have a powerful impact, and do attract explanations, from subjects and 'experts' alike. It would certainly be a mistake to regard mystical experience as the essence or goal of religion, for religions are complex, multi-faceted phenomena, and the spiritual life consists of far more than access to special states of consciousness, but it would also be a mistake to neglect moments of intense experience that transform lives and raise profound questions.

The Explanations

Like other extraordinary experiences, extrovertive mystical experiences raise pressing questions for those who have them: 'What happened? Why did it happen? Will it happen again? Should I tell anybody?' It is not every day that one feels united with the world, knowing all, loving all, liberated from self-concern, transcending time, illumined, blissful, and, it seems, face to face with reality. Confronted with tales of extraordinary experiences, and in some cases inspired by their own unusual experiences, specialists also look for understanding, drawing upon their fields of expertise—psychology, psychiatry, biology, sociology, philosophy, theology—to explain what lies behind the experiences.

At the least, the present study will highlight the often divergent ways in which extrovertive mystical experiences have been explained. In Part II, explanations that have enjoyed some critical attention are re-examined, and those that have been neglected receive an airing. There is much to be gained by assembling a variety of

explanations. It provides a corrective to the usual tendency of specialists to fix on one explanatory approach to the exclusion of others. It also brings the advantages of comparative work: when explanations rub together, similarities and differences are placed in strong relief, and strengths and limitations become more obvious. It also encourages historical insights: we shall see how explanatory approaches shifted as the twentieth century unfolded. The present work is not a historical study, but it does draw attention to some major episodes in the intellectual history of extrovertive explanation.

In Chapters 4 to 8, these developments will be considered in detail. For the moment, it will suffice to give an overview of what is to come ('A Hundred Years of Explanation' below). Some theorists, particularly in the early years, gave credence to *transpersonal* factors by allowing persons to reach beyond themselves in ways that are not covered by the perceptual, biological, psychological, and social processes admitted by naturalistic science. For example, it has been claimed that in extrovertive experience the mystic intuits the presence of a spiritual being in nature or discovers mind in the world at large. Additionally or alternatively, theorists have called upon factors that do feature in mainstream natural and social sciences. Some are *contextual* contributions from the religious and cultural backgrounds of mystics, the acquired beliefs and practices that could exert an influence on the occurrence, characteristics, description, and interpretation of mystical experiences. Other factors are the intrinsic biological and psychological processes that structure ordinary experience and which possibly contribute to mystical experience too. Intrinsic biological and psychological factors recognized by naturalistic science can be termed *intrapersonal* to distinguish them from intrinsic factors of a transpersonal character, such as an indwelling soul or spiritual essence.

Explanations differ not only in their transpersonal, contextual, or intrapersonal orientations but also in the kinds of issues they address. For example, some explanations focus on the mechanisms that give rise to mystical experiences, whilst others have more to say about the functional value of the experiences. In 'Explanation and Reduction', I introduce these differences. Another topic highlighted below is the importance of metaphysics in the study of mystical experience ('The Relevance of Metaphysics'). Too often, contemporary scholars of mysticism have passed over some of the more interesting questions. Do mystical experiences really put

mystics in touch with reality? What do the experiences tell us about the world and human nature?

A Hundred Years of Explanation

The explanations explored in Part II are modern ones, with the earliest dating from the late nineteenth century, although some draw inspiration from ideas that go back well over two thousand years. The explanations were devised by theorists in the English-speaking world (e.g. Bucke, Carpenter, Inge, Underhill, Zaehner, Stace) or by those who achieved recognition there (e.g. Freud, Otto, Neumann). Undoubtedly, there are others whose ideas deserve attention, such as the French author and pacifist Romain Rolland (1866–1944), and several German writers, including Rolland's friend and mentor Malwida von Meysenbug (1816–1903), the philosopher Karl Joël (1864–1934), and the literary and theatre critic Julius Hart (1859–1930) (see Riedel 1996). Despite these limitations, my rummagings in the humanities scholarship on mysticism have brought to light some varied explanations, and a glance at psychoanalytic theories and contemporary neuropsychological ideas has added to the wealth of offerings.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the vogue for reductionistic medical and psychiatric explanations of religious and mystical experiences, famously criticized by William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), was counterbalanced by unashamedly transpersonal understandings that included mystical experiences of nature within their explanatory remit. As we shall see in Chapter 4, these transpersonal approaches had both secular and Christian representatives. From the early 1890s, R. M. Bucke and Edward Carpenter described a 'cosmic' form of consciousness with a transpersonal reach. For these thinkers, mystical experience was pre-eminently this-worldly, a glimpse of the world that would one day be realized through a radical transformation of consciousness, religion, and society. Their theorizing was socially oriented and secular, yet transpersonal too:

- emergence of a special faculty that intuits cosmic wholeness (Bucke)
- an integrative recovery of pre-existing universal consciousness (Carpenter)

Historically and conceptually, Bucke and Carpenter sit alongside their Christian counterparts W. R. Inge and Evelyn Underhill. Both sets of theorists were transpersonal in orientation, both expressed the world-affirming spirituality of the pre-war period, and both trusted in the long-term spiritual progress of humankind. Inge and Underhill translated the liberal Christian affirmation of immanence and transcendence into a typology that esteemed two genuine mystical paths, the immanent way of nature mysticism and the transcendent way of inward mysticism. For Inge, Underhill, and other theorists who took up the twofold typology, notably Rudolf Otto, mystical experiences of the world really do put mystics in touch with spiritual reality:

- apprehension of the mind of God in nature (Inge)
- apprehension of God in nature (Underhill)
- a priori knowledge of the One in and behind phenomena (Otto)

Inge, Underhill, and Otto are more important for their typological contributions than for their explanations of extrovertive experience, which were fairly nebulous and inattentive to the experiential data. The twofold typology was important because it established extrovertive mystical experience as a distinct and significant type of mystical experience.

Esteemed by such influential figures as Bucke, Carpenter, Inge, and Underhill, extrovertive mysticism was well positioned for future recognition and study, but its prestige was soon to decline. The great disillusionment of the First World War extended to theology, tipping the immanence–transcendence balance towards a God beyond the world, a separation of spirit and nature. The intimate presence of a loving God in the fabric of a world racked by suffering and meaningless slaughter seemed implausible. In philosophy, the optimistic kinds of speculative metaphysics that could marry well with extrovertive mysticism, notably idealist and vitalist metaphysics, went out of fashion, and in psychology, behaviourism and psychoanalysis displaced the rich conceptions of the unconscious that had informed some approaches to mystical experience.

The Second World War also had transcendentalizing repercussions. R. C. Zaehner, a convert from his own mystical 'pantheism' to Catholicism in the 1940s, looked upon the material world with some disgust, and he separated it sharply from the spiritual reality he put beyond the world. For Zaehner, there was no room for truly spiritual experience of the natural world because the world is without

spirit. A shift towards transcendence is evident too in W. T. Stace's influential discussion. Stace, like Zaehner, had come to subscribe to a spirit–nature dualism in which the natural world is essentially non-spiritual. In Chapter 5, we shall see that Stace's theistic disillusionment and thoroughgoing naturalism at the time of the Second World War were relieved by the discovery of the transcendent One of the mystical philosophers, a conversion that dictated his subsequent understanding and comparatively low estimation of extrovertive experience. Stace judged the experience unimportant for he located the essence of mysticism in pure, undifferentiated consciousness. Nevertheless, his chief explanation of extrovertive experience does call upon a transpersonal reality, a 'pure consciousness' that has recently made a comeback in Robert Forman's thought, which is also discussed in Chapter 5:

- identity with the pure consciousness or 'self' beyond nature (Stace)
- a paradoxical identity-in-difference of sensory phenomena (Stace)
- extension of pure consciousness into nature (Forman)

As a contentless state of consciousness, pure consciousness does not seem to have much to do with extrovertive experiences, which are often very rich in contents. Stace's approach is therefore not at all promising. In Forman's treatment, however, Stace's spirit–nature separationism is overcome because Forman recognizes deeper kinds of extrovertive experience in which pure consciousness and the natural world come together. And Forman, unlike Stace, raises the possibility of a permanent extrovertive state, a suggestion that invites us to consider whether profound, enduring extrovertive experiences are really possible.

Although relegated to an inferior status by Stace and Zaehner, extrovertive experience received attention in their works, and subsequent discussion has generally looked back to these authorities, adopting, adapting, or rejecting their typologies. Their works marked a more critical phase in the study of mysticism in which the role of interpretation received some attention, although the phase was to give way to yet more sophisticated developments in the 1970s and 1980s.[2] It had often been assumed that mystical experiences are essentially the same across religions, cultures, and

[2] On phases in the study of mysticism, see Moore (1990), Kourie (1992: 83–4), and McGinn (1992: 263–343).

historical periods, or occur in just a limited number of cross-cultural types, as Stace and Zaehner had supposed. However, Bruce Garside, Steven Katz, and others initiated a debate that has continued to the present day by insisting that mystical experience is variable across religious traditions because it is fundamentally conditioned by its doctrinal and cultural contexts. This *contextual* argument, which is the subject of Chapter 6, cast doubt on cross-tradition typologies and directed attention to the study of mysticism embedded within religious traditions. Epistemological and methodological concerns came to dominate, including the 'radical contextualist' position that made interpretation central to mystical experience itself. Mystical experience came to be viewed as socially conditioned to its very core, a view that stood in opposition to the venerable belief, taken up by some psychologists at the time (e.g. Arthur Deikman, Robert Ornstein), that mystical experience results from a deconditioning of ordinary experience:

- religious and cultural conditioning ('radical contextualism')
- deconditioning of ordinary experience ('mystical deconstructivism')

With the rise of contextual epistemology, interest in extrovertive experience waned, even though the experience could have been used to challenge the contextual argument. It is notable that extrovertive experiences in the modern world often occur *outside any clear tradition of teaching and practice*, in non-religious contexts, and to persons who had no idea that there were such experiences. It is therefore by no means obvious that the experiences are a product of indoctrination and enculturation. Critics of radical contextualism, such as Robert Forman, took up pure consciousness as a counter-example. Empty of contents, pure consciousness seems to exhibit no signs of conditioning. Forman hoped that discussion would eventually be extended to 'the more advanced and interesting extrovertive states' (1990*a*: 8), and he has followed up his suggestion to some extent. The present study is, in part, an attempt to advance Forman's programme by taking up the case of extrovertive experience. Cultural factors undoubtedly have an influence on the experiences, especially on peripheral issues and sometimes on core visionary and noetic contents, but I shall show that there is much about extrovertive experience that cannot be put down to religious and cultural context. I shall also suggest that extrovertive experience is often too complex and sophisticated to result from a simple deconstruction of ordinary experience. Extrovertive experiences must

draw in significant ways on other sources, intrapersonal, transpersonal, or both, and it is these other sources that are the subject matter of Chapters 7 and 8.

The explanations discussed in Chapter 7 are mainly intrapersonal and reductionistic. For the most part, Zaehner reduced extrovertive experiences to psychiatric and psychological phenomena, and in this respect, he was close to Freud, who traced extrovertive feelings of unity to infantile cognition. Their explanations cast extrovertive experience in an unflattering light, although some psychological explanations have affirmed the experiences by regarding them as oriented towards health or growth:

- mania brought on by mental illness or other causes (Zaehner)
- nostalgia for intra-uterine absorption (Zaehner's 'early Jung')
- unity with an inner, mental model of the world (Zaehner)
- persistence of inclusive, infantile ideation in the adult mind (Freud)
- individuation through a return to the unconscious (Neumann)
- a reparative psychological response to childhood loss (object relations)

In recent years, psychological theories have been joined by neuropsychological speculations, some of which include extrovertive experience within their remit:

- emotional investment following temporal-lobe seizure (Ramachandran)
- microseizures in the temporal lobes (Persinger)
- changes to the neurophysiological substrates of the self (Austin)
- input changes to the parietal lobes (d'Aquili and Newberg)

Neuropsychological explanations of religious experience have tended to be overambitious, driven by new technology at the expense of typological sensitivity, philosophical depth, and awareness of religious and cultural dimensions. Nevertheless, it is very likely that the brain plays some role, even if it may turn out to be a supporting role.

The intrapersonal explanations discussed in Chapter 7 prove to be either too weak or too underdeveloped to give a satisfactory naturalistic account of extrovertive experience. There is still room for approaches that are not entirely naturalistic, and so, in Chapter 8, I turn once again to the possibility of a transpersonal basis by looking at two overlapping sets of ideas:

- consciousness expansion through influx of the subliminal ('filtration theory')

- contact with mind intrinsic to the world at large (mind–body metaphysics)

In the first approach, it is supposed that mystical experiences and other unusual states arise when biological and psychological 'valves' allow ordinarily excluded contents of the subconscious to enter consciousness. Aldous Huxley famously contended that mystical and paranormal experiences occur when a 'reducing valve' lets in 'Mind at Large'. This biological and psychological type of approach can blend into philosophical speculation if mind–body metaphysics is raised to support the idea of consciousness beyond the brain. The mind–body problem has once again become a matter of interest in mainstream thought, and renewed attempts to explain extrovertive experience could turn again to filtration theories and mind–body metaphysics. Indeed, a few modern thinkers have raised mind–body philosophy in connection with extrovertive mystical experience and nondual perception of the world. After considering various mind–body approaches, I conclude with a speculative venture into the area, outlining a panpsychic type of idealism that could form the basis of an extrovertive explanation.

Explanation and Reduction

Explanations answer the 'hows', 'whys', and 'whats', questions about characteristics, structure, nature, causes, function, purpose, meaning, origins, development, and ends. What kinds of questions can be asked about extrovertive experience? These are the questions that will be addressed in the first three chapters, questions about definition, nomenclature, typology, incidence, phenomenology, circumstances, and consequences. These questions can be addressed by descriptive efforts up to a point, but explanation cannot be left aside for long. Without explanation, uncertainties over definition, characterization, and typology are inevitable. For instance, it is possible that some experiences have superficially similar characteristics but are very different in nature and should not be classed together. Until we understand how the experiences come about and what they are, there will be uncertainties over their definition and classification.

Several kinds of explanations can be distinguished. *Causal* explanations aim to uncover the chains of cause and effect behind phenomena. What gives rise to the characteristics of extrovertive experience, such as unitive feelings, luminosity, expanded knowledge, and

altered time-experience? Are the characteristics related to one another through a common cause? Why are some experiences considerably different from others? Why do certain settings, states of mind, practices, and drugs tend to promote the experiences? Causal explanations can be natural and social-scientific, tracing physical, psychological, or social pathways of cause and effect, but they can also be transpersonal, with supernatural or spiritual agencies attributed a causal role. Causal explanations are sometimes *genetic*, tracing the steps through which something has come to be, but explanations of origin (and explanations in general) can also be *purposive*, offering motives, *teleological*, ascribing ends, or *evolutionary*, explaining origins and characteristics by means of natural selection and environmental adaptation, or some other evolutionary process. All these forms of explanations have featured in the study of mystical experience. There are also *functional* explanations, according to which things take place in order 'to do' something. For instance, an explanation may look at the social function of spiritual experiences in the lives of subjects and their communities, as in I. M. Lewis's celebrated study of spirit possession (1971). Or spiritual experiences may be ascribed a therapeutic and transformative function, bringing health and growth (e.g. Grof 1988). There are also *correlative* explanations, which point out recurrent associations without asserting causal relations. Unusually cautious physiologists may describe correlations between brain physiology and mystical experiences without proceeding to the stronger causal-genetic assertion that the brain produces the experiences. Finally, there is explanation that attempts to say what a thing really is, which I shall call *ontological* explanation. In essence, extrovertive experience *is* contact with a spiritual presence in nature; it *is* infantile cognition; it *is* disordered brain physiology; it *is* a social construct.

Ontological explanations sometimes coincide with the 'insider' understandings of mystics, but very often they follow a different tack, performing *ontological reductions* that depict the phenomenon as something other than it appeared to be.[3] Ontological reductionism

[3] On types of reductionism, see for instance Peacocke (1985) and Jones (2000). Peacocke distinguishes 'methodological reductionism' (analysis of the subject into parts to aid study), 'epistemological reductionism' (translation of one theory into the terms of another), and 'ontological reductionism' (the claim that something is really something else).

is ontological because it asserts what truly is; it is reductive because it finds reality in something other than the thing itself. According to Zaehner, nature mystics believe that they have experienced unity with the world when in fact they have experienced unity with their inner mental models of the world. Reductionism is not limited to ontological explanation. For instance, a *functional reduction* replaces the insider's functional understanding with an outsider's functional explanation: 'You say that the experience was granted to you to strengthen your faith, but the experience actually served to reinforce your standing in the community.' A *genetic reduction* reappraises origins: 'You believe that your mystical training helped you towards an encounter with reality, but the training was really a conditioning process that manufactured the experience.'

Clearly, reductionistic explanations are often unflattering, and they are liable to draw hostile reactions from those who value the experiences. Hostile reactions are understandable, but rejection of social and natural scientific explanation is unhelpful. Religious and mystical experiences do take place in the contexts of bodies, minds, and societies, and so they are open, at least in some respects, to biological, psychological, and sociological study. Untested convictions about the falsity or truth of reductions lead nowhere: the truth of reductionistic approaches is 'an open rather than closed question, an empirical rather than *a priori* one', as Robert Segal has put it (1983: 114). Reductionistic explanations should not be faulted because they are reductionistic, but they should be faulted if they are unable to account for the data or are deficient in other ways. Likewise, non-reductionistic approaches should not be faulted because they have a place for transpersonal realities or processes in their explanations, but they should be criticized if they ignore the data or exhibit other faults.

When evaluating explanations of extrovertive experience, we can ask several questions. Does the explanation account for more than one or two characteristics? Does it explain why certain circumstances are facilitative? Is the explanation 'good'? Criteria for 'good' theories have been discussed in the sciences: subsumptive power, economy, clarity, testability, empirical support, fertility, predictive value, internal consistency, responsiveness to new evidence, and so forth. Some criteria are closely tied to the demands of scientific empiricism, notably predictive value and testability, and may not be so relevant to the more philosophical explanations, which do not often lend themselves to simple hypothesis testing, although they

should nevertheless respect and address the empirical data. Other criteria are more generally applicable, such as subsumptive power, economy, clarity, fertility, and internal consistency. For instance, a philosophy of mind that sheds light on a range of experiences, ordinary and extraordinary, has greater subsumptive power than one that makes sense of only ordinary experience. An economical explanation of extrovertive characteristics is preferable to one that raises a multiplicity of ad hoc hypotheses to furnish disconnected explanations of individual features.

The Relevance of Metaphysics

In the contemporary study of mysticism, there has been a reluctance to engage with metaphysical issues. Do mystical experiences really put mystics in touch with reality? Does the oft-reported sense of 'timelessness' tell us something about the nature of time in the world at large? What does mystical experience tell us about human nature? Scientific investigators tend to dismiss or pass over metaphysical questions, placing them beyond the reach of scientific study; humanities scholars have concerned themselves with philosophical issues, but largely with epistemology, logic, and ethics. The reluctance to engage with metaphysics partly reflects a widespread distrust of speculative metaphysics: some philosophers advocated the circumscription of traditional metaphysical ambitions and methods (e.g. C. S. Peirce, William James, Bertrand Russell) or rejected metaphysics altogether (Ludwig Wittgenstein, logical positivism), for a variety of reasons, philosophical and ideological.[4] Traditional metaphysical questions have been viewed as unanswerable or meaningless. In the study of mystical experience, the distrust of metaphysics translates into the opinion that questions about transpersonal contributions are unanswerable or misconceived. Interest in metaphysics may also be frowned upon because it raises suspicions that a confessional agenda is being pursued, at odds with the academy's ideal of objective study. Metaphysics, if it is to be considered at all, should be left to theologians.

[4] See DeAngelis (1997) and Linsky (1997) for a survey of twentieth-century metaphysical developments in the English-speaking world, including a limited return to metaphysics in the second half of the century.

However, metaphysics cannot be safely ignored in the study of mysticism because mystical experiences often carry metaphysical import. Subjects believe that they have gained insights into reality, self, time, and ultimate meaning, if only for the duration of their experiences. There is a clear link between mysticism and metaphysics: both are directed towards reality, the former seemingly through a direct intuition, the latter through discursive reasoning. The shared concern with reality suggests that there is a valid place for *metaphysical enquiry* in the study of mysticism, as a complement of epistemological, phenomenological, psychological, biological, sociological, textual, and historical approaches. At its least controversial, metaphysical enquiry would consist in *analysis*, the description and evaluation of the metaphysical claims of mystics and the explicit or hidden metaphysical contents of scholarly explanations. What assumptions do the explanations carry about reality, self, time, human nature, and the mind–body relation? Do they, for instance, take for granted a materialist conception of the natural world (e.g. Zaehner), a naturalistic account of human nature (e.g. Freud), a materialist or epiphenomenalist theory of the mind–brain relation (e.g. many physiologists)?

More controversially, metaphysical enquiry would engage in *theorizing*, in the formulation of explanations with an explicit metaphysical component, whether naturalistic or spiritual, secular or religious. To be acceptable as a scholarly activity, the theorizing would have to avoid dogmatism, pursued in a critical fashion with attention to evidence and argument. In advocating a place for metaphysical enquiry in the academic study of mysticism, I follow G. William Barnard (1994; 1997; 2002), who has explored William James's approach to mysticism to show how scholars may break free from the 'rather restrictive methodology' of contemporary philosophy of mysticism (1997: 89–90). Barnard points out that if metaphysics is ignored or dismissed it will nonetheless exert an influence through 'internalized metaphysical assumptions'. It is better to bring assumptions into the open for critical scrutiny than to allow them to operate unexamined in the background. In the spirit of Barnard's observations, I attempt to bring out the metaphysical aspects of existing extrovertive explanations, giving particular attention to the metaphysics behind Stace's understanding of mystical experience. Stace was a philosopher of the analytic school who retained an interest in metaphysics. His understanding of mystical experience was closely tied to his metaphysical presuppositions, yet

he failed to make these clear in his major study of mysticism. Thus, despite Stace's prominence in the modern study of mysticism, the rich metaphysical background to his work is largely unappreciated, and it therefore receives in-depth analysis here.

In Chapter 8, I indulge in a little metaphysical theorizing myself. I discuss some mind–body philosophies that could be utilized in extrovertive mystical explanation, and I come out in favour of idealism. Of all the metaphysical systems that could be used to explain extrovertive experience, I favour as a starting point a realist form of idealism that acknowledges the existence of the external world but which takes it to be mental in nature. I find the approach attractive not least because it seems to offer the best hope for understanding experience in general, ordinary as well as mystical. As we shall see, J. E. Mercer and Edward Carpenter raised this kind of idealist philosophy in their discussions of extrovertive experience. It will also become apparent that I take the idealism in a panpsychic direction, developing it along Leibnizian lines. Although seemingly outlandish, the metaphysics has some attractions.

'Mystic Scholars'

Theorists are likely to benefit from personal familiarity with the experiences they try to explain, although familiarity can create problems too. Frits Staal has gone so far as to claim that 'If mysticism is to be studied seriously, it should not merely be studied indirectly and from without, but also directly and from within' (1975: 123). Staal recommended experimentation with drugs and training in meditative disciplines under the guidance of competent teachers. On the face of it, Staal's point seems reasonable. It is usually beneficial to have 'hands-on' experience, and a lack of it can be disadvantageous. Freud boasted that he could not discover the 'oceanic feeling' in himself, and his appreciation of extrovertive phenomenology was limited, dependent on the meagre information provided by his correspondent Romain Rolland. Inevitably, limited appreciation of phenomenology leads to poor explanation.

However, the extent to which Staal's recommendation can or should be realized in the study of extrovertive experience is debatable. Investigators could try to gain firsthand acquaintance through various means. Aesthetic experiences of nature are readily

facilitated, for it is simple enough to immerse oneself in beautiful surroundings. On occasions, aesthetic experiences develop into extrovertive mystical experiences. However, deliberate attempts to use natural surroundings as triggers may prove unsuccessful if anticipation inhibits the mental sets that seem to be conducive to the experiences, such as a relaxed, empty state of mind. Other means available to investigators include meditative practices and psychedelic substances, as recommended by Staal. In the first case, the procedure (say, Zen meditation) may be prohibitively arduous and protracted for research purposes, and competent, non-exploitative teachers can be hard to find. The second method, although expeditious, may be unacceptable on moral or legal grounds, and carry serious risks to body and mind. In both cases, investigators would have to be alert to artefacts introduced by the facilitation method. The more complex meditative practices, such as those employing visualization, could introduce extraneous elements to the experiences. Psychedelic drugs commonly bring gross perceptual distortions and trains of images that are not typical of spontaneous extrovertive cases.

Still, recourse to firsthand experience may be an option for some investigators, and several scholars of mysticism have enjoyed at least passing acquaintance with mystical states, spontaneously, or through spiritual practices or drugs. The topic has been discussed in some depth by Jeffrey Kripal (2001), who has looked at the ways in which the mystical experiences of scholars have influenced their readings and writings. Contemporary examples include Kripal himself, Robert Forman (1990*a*; 1999), Robert May (1993), Michael Stoeber (1994), William Barnard (1997), James Austin (1998), Robert Ellwood (1999), and Arthur Deikman (2000), who have all disclosed firsthand experiences in connection with their studies of mysticism and altered states of consciousness. Earlier examples include W. R. Inge, William James, Evelyn Underhill, and Rufus Jones, who were reticent about their experiences, and R. M. Bucke, Edward Carpenter, P. D. Ouspensky, Francis Younghusband, Henry Nelson Wieman, Aldous Huxley, R. C. Zaehner, F. C. Happold, and Agehananda Bharati, who were more forthcoming.

Barnard raises a mystical episode in his early teens partly to cast doubt on the viewpoint that all mystical experiences are completely constructed from previous beliefs (1997: 127–9), and Forman, as we shall see, has drawn on his own meditative experiences to illustrate some of the mystical states he describes. Both have felt the need to

justify their autobiographical inclusions, believing that the introduction of personal material would be frowned upon in contemporary academia. Barnard argues that it is important to bring one's experiences into the open, not only for the positive contribution they may bring to the discussion, but also to make clear any personal perspectives that may colour the treatment. A look at the scholarship on extrovertive mystical experience corroborates Barnard's point, for in some instances it is apparent that personal experiences contributed to unsatisfactory characterizations and poor explanations. Reliance on one's own experiences can be double-edged: the experiences provide an invaluable foothold in an elusive domain, but they can also lead to distortions if used uncritically. In particular, there is the danger that experiences will be taken to be fully representative. As we shall see, Bucke's understanding of the characteristics and predisposing circumstances of cosmic consciousness was overly dependent on his own case, and Zaehner, who berated Bucke for his obtuseness, was equally guilty of generalization from personal experience. It is ironic that Zaehner took Bucke to task for incautious extrapolation from firsthand experience: 'Now, it is the custom of the nature mystics to assume that their own experience, even though it last only for a few moments, must be normative of all such experiences' (1970: 46). Zaehner was no exception, for he treated his own experience as normative. The lesson is not that investigators should suppress their experiences or avoid firsthand exploration. Rather, investigators should not assume that their experiences are fully representative, and they should study the accounts of others in a more than superficial way, alert to differences as well as to similarities.

In light of the above, it is only proper that I acknowledge two personal experiences that could pass as 'extrovertive mystical experience', depending on how it is defined. They have undoubtedly influenced my understanding of the subject. The first developed out of aesthetic appreciation of nature. Amid falling cherry blossoms and the yellowing light of late afternoon, I became unusually affected by the beauty of the scene: 'I was not an "I"—my energy was uncontained, my thoughts quiet' is how I described the event shortly afterwards. The mood lasted for two or three hours, with a slight interruption, and persisted even when I joined the company of others. The experience was mild and could be judged a particularly well-developed aesthetic experience or a rather underdeveloped mystical experience. A somewhat different and far more intense

experience took place a few months later whilst I was asleep. On waking, I felt a very strong, almost indescribable afterglow of 'wholeness', but I could not recall its origin, although it seemed to be connected with a dream. Some details eventually came back to me, and I was able to recall in fragmentary fashion an experience of expansive knowledge, vision, unity, and love. Both experiences brought a diminution of the usual self-focus, but they were also significantly different in character and circumstance. The second, taking place during sleep, has alerted me to the fact that extrovertive experiences may not always take place with the 'eyes open', through the senses, as some scholars have assumed. In Chapter 1, I have defined extrovertive experience accordingly, acknowledging that it can sometimes follow from an interior movement, when sensory input no longer dominates, as in sleep, near-death crises, and some meditative states.

This page intentionally left blank

PART I
The Experiences

This page intentionally left blank

I

Extrovertive Mystical Experience

Definition and Incidence

It may be thought that mystical experience is a rather obscure and remote occurrence, an oddity confined to the austere lives of long-dead saints and sages. Yet mystical experiences of the natural world are certainly not the preserve of the holy few. They take place in the modern world and befall all manner of persons, young and old, religious and non-religious, in a surprising variety of circumstances. Sometimes, when I have let slip my interest in extrovertive mystical experience, the admission has been met with a flash of recognition and even a personal story to tell. It has seemed to me, through these disclosures, that the experience may not be uncommon. But personal impressions can be misleading, and I look into the matter below, noting the results of some survey studies. I also consider whether the experience is a modern, secular development or has precedents in the world's religious traditions. Although no firm conclusions can be reached at present, I think it is fair to say that the experience is relatively common, at least in its mildest forms, and that it does have counterparts in pre-modern times.

But first there are some basic questions to address. What are mystical experiences of the natural world like? How can they be distinguished from other mystical experiences? What name is best given to them? Not everyone who has the experience knows to call it 'mystical', and perhaps there is no great advantage in using the label, for it carries much historical, scholarly, and popular baggage. However, there are no really good alternatives, and the usage is well established. More significantly, the boundaries of the extrovertive mystical category are somewhat problematic. For one thing, there is considerable variety amongst the experiences, with no single characteristic that is always reported. For another, some experiences develop through stages, and it may be necessary to recognize distinct sub-types too. Additionally, the 'natural world', which describes the object of the experience, is not an entirely transparent concept and is open to philosophical scrutiny. But the present chapter, in

conjunction with the two that follow, will hopefully give a sense of the experiences and show that there is an intriguing phenomenon that calls for explanation.

Defining the Experiences

Some experiences of the world exhibit unusual and puzzling features that set them apart from everyday perceptions. Consider, for example, the following event recounted by John Franklin:

> The major incident in my life occurred when I was at school aged 14. One hot Sunday afternoon in June 1949, lying on my back on a knoll under a lime tree, aware of the scents and sounds of summer and watching the flickering sun-light through the leaves of the lime tree, my mind went a blank—I suddenly found myself surrounded, embraced, by a white light, which seemed both to come from within me and from without, a very bright light but quite unlike any ordinary physical light. I was filled with an overwhelming sense of Love, of warmth, peace and joy—a Love far, far greater than any human love could be—utterly accepting, giving, compassionate, total Love. I seemed to sense a presence, but did not see anybody. I had the feeling of being 'one' with everything, and 'knowing' all things—whatever I wanted to know, I 'knew' instantly and directly. I had the sense of this being utter Reality, the real Real, far more 'real' and vivid than the ordinary everyday 'reality' of the physical world. I do not know how long this lasted: it did not seem to be a long time in that dimension; a minute? a few seconds? I don't know. Back again in this world, lying under the lime tree, I felt thunderstruck. What was that? What did it mean? (Franklin 2000: 14)

Whereas everyday experience is, for the most part, organized around a sharp distinction between self and other, Franklin's experience brought a relaxation of the distinction. He felt 'one' with everything. His engagement with the world was further transformed by an intellectual capacity that apparently enabled him to know anything he wished, and his visual experience was altered by a luminosity that seemed to be both inside and in the world outside. These unitive, intellectual, and illuminative changes are often found together, along with other features reported by Franklin—love, peace, joy, and a sense of contact with reality. Another account, similar in many respects to Franklin's, omits some features but introduces additional ones:

> I cannot recall that I was thinking of anything in particular, when all of a sudden I was in a new dimension of experience. I can only attempt to explain

this by saying that at one moment I was rigid, and the next I had become fluid and merged with all there is. There was no sense of individual identity, yet personal awareness and appreciation remained. There was no past and no future, only awareness of living in an eternal moment that encompassed all that has been, that is, and that will be.

I felt that I knew all, and nothing seemed to be unnecessary or out of place. There was perfect harmony and perfect blending of all into an indescribable expression of joy, peace, beauty, and love. One could only marvel and say 'Of course! Of course!' It was all crystal-clear. One knew all in that moment, and yet knew nothing. I was contented and thankful beyond words just to experience *being*. The thought of God never crossed my mind, but immediately the experience passed I thought, 'So that was God' or nirvana, or whatever word you use to express the inexpressible.

During this experience I was aware of a veil just ahead of me, and within range of my finger-tips. I knew that if I reached out and parted the veil I would look upon the mystery of all life. An intense curiosity urged me to do this, but although I longed to look I could not bring myself to part the veil. I just felt that I could not look upon this awesome mystery. It was enough to know that it was there, and that all was well, now and always.

Then, just as suddenly as I had found myself in the experience, I found myself back in the everyday world. It is a world little different from what it has always been, but for me there is one new dimension, and I don't think my world will ever contract back to its former limits . . . I suppose the end result of these experiences has been for me a realisation, despite all evidence to the contrary, that all is well now and always, that the power of love absorbs all and transcends all—and that the love of God is an ever-present reality—an ever-present reality that enfolds us always. ('person I have not met', in Johnson 1984: 111–12)

Once again there was unity, knowledge, love, joy, and peace, but in this case there was no bright light and no unseen presence. Nor is the sense of contact with reality so clearly articulated. But the second account introduces some details of its own. There was insight into the economy and harmony of the world, a realization that everything is essentially right, and the discovery that past, present, and future exist together in the moment. Finally, the experience promised to open to yet greater depths of understanding, but the subject retreated from the 'awesome' revelation.

The two experiences are far from solitary cases: many similar instances are described in the body of spiritual testimonies that has accumulated over the last two hundred years. The similarities suggest that a special category of experience deserves to be recognized, a type of experience in which the world is seen anew, transformed by unity, knowledge, light, love, eternity. This type of experience has

been called *extrovertive mystical experience* (EME). It is 'mystical' because the experience commonly brings unity, profound knowledge, and a sense of contact with reality, features often taken to be defining characteristics of 'mystical experience' (see below). It is 'extrovertive'—literally 'outward-turning'—because the experience has some orientation towards the world, unlike mystical experience that is purely interior or 'introvertive'.

As we shall see in the next chapter, scholarly efforts to identify the typical characteristics of extrovertive mystical experience have not been entirely successful, with some important characteristics and variants neglected. The 'feature list' in Table 1.1 is offered as an improvement on earlier attempts but still cannot be regarded as comprehensive or definitive. Only a few variants of each feature are given, and only some of the less commonly reported features are included. It is worth paying attention to neglected features, such as the auditory, somatic, synaesthetic, and paranormal phenomena included at the bottom of the list, because they may provide valuable clues.

It would be surprising if a single account described all the items in the feature list. Commonly, a varied selection is reported, with some accounts describing many features and others only a few. For example, Franklin's account relates many more features than the following description:

> I was a girl of 15 or 16, I was in the kitchen toasting bread for tea and suddenly on a dark November afternoon the whole place was flooded with light, and for a minute by clock time I was immersed in this, and I had a sense that in some unutterable way the universe was all right. ('unknown correspondent', in Huxley 1972: 49)

The features reported here are luminous transfiguration of self and surroundings, a sense of all-rightness, and perhaps a hint of altered time-experience in the phrase 'for a minute by clock time', which perhaps implies that the experience transcended clock time in some way. Even fewer details may be reported: for instance, one man described a teenage experience of euphoria accompanied by luminous suffusion of the world ('Edward', in Hoffman 1992: 34). There may, of course, be experiential features that go unreported in such accounts because they were unnoticed, forgotten, or considered too unimportant or too personal to mention. Accounts are acts of self-presentation, to oneself and to others, and so may involve some degree of 'information management'.

TABLE 1.1 Feature list of extrovertive mystical experience

Feature	Some variants
Unity	Feeling part of the whole; the world contained within; everything intimately connected; community
Self	Relaxation of individual identity; identification with persons, animals, plants, objects, even the entire cosmos; discovery of deeper self
Knowledge	Intuitive, all-encompassing knowledge ('knew everything'); specific questions answered instantaneously; insights into order, harmony, and perfection of the world, the meaning of suffering, evolutionary development, the rightness of things ('all shall be well'); recognition that one has 'come home'
Love	All-embracing love; sense of being deeply loved
Beauty	Extraordinary beauty; everything equally beautiful
Miscellaneous feelings	Bliss, joy, elation, uplift, peace, relief, gratitude, wonder, power, fearlessness, humour, surprise, insignificance, humility, unworthiness, awe, terror, discomfort with sheer intensity
Time	Time 'stops'; past, present, future coexist; harmonious flow
Reality	Sense of contact with normally hidden depths of reality
Realness	'Very real'—ordinary experience seems less real
Life	Everything animated with 'life', 'consciousness', 'energy'; things once thought living are lifeless in comparison
Presence	A 'presence' or 'power' in nature or in the immediate vicinity
Attention	Heightened awareness; focused attention; clarity
Vision	Special light suffuses or obliterates surroundings; vivid colours; transparency; vision of cosmic scope
Sound	Silence; 'music'
Body	Sensations through the body or at places along the spine
Fusion	Light, love, bliss, knowledge fused together; synaesthetic fusion of sensory contents
Paranormal	Extrasensory perceptions; out-of-the-body experience

Some items in the feature list are of special importance because they contribute to the extrovertive character of the experience. To qualify as extrovertive, a mystical experience should bring a transformed apprehension of the natural world through, for example, one or more of the following:

- *unity* with the world or some of its contents
- incorporation of the world into the *self*
- intuitive *comprehension* of the world
- a *love* that encompasses all things
- expansive *vision* of the world
- extraordinary *beauty* of the world
- *luminous* transfiguration of the environment
- an altered *temporality* that includes all times and places

Some other features, such as a simple loss of self-identity or a light that obscures the surroundings, are not sufficient to make a mystical experience extrovertive because they do not involve the requisite engagement with the natural world.

It is important to note that 'natural world' is used quite broadly here: it refers to the world of objects and processes that we find presented or represented in everyday sensory experience, a world that includes familiar items such as mountains, trees, animals, human beings, tables, and bicycles, as well as objects and processes that are not capable of being perceived in the ordinary manner but which have a claim to be contents of the universe in the way that the familiar objects and processes are. These include items that are not visible to the naked eye because they are too small, too large, or too distant. Extrovertive mystical experiences are mystical experiences in which the natural world occupies the 'mystical' focus of the experience. The subject feels united with the world, intuits a special unity between its parts, discovers some deep meaning in them, sees a special luminosity in them.

Extrovertive mystical experience so understood still has a place for elements that are often regarded as outside the natural order, such as God, the Absolute, angels, and ghosts, so long as there are some natural contents at the mystical focus of the experience. Thus, an apprehension of God fully or partially immanent in the universe would pass as extrovertive, but contact with God entirely apart from the world would not (Table 1.2).

The extrovertive category so defined is quite broad: it includes experiences of the cosmic and mundane, of the wilderness, countryside, and town, of the non-human and human, of the natural and manufactured, and of supernatural realities so long as the natural world is also centrally involved. At the same time, the category is not so broad as to be useless. There are experiences that do not qualify as extrovertive, namely those in which the natural world and its contents are not a mystical focus.

TABLE 1.2 Distinguishing extrovertive mystical experience

Extrovertive mystical	Mystical but not extrovertive
Unity with the world or its parts	Identity with undifferentiated Absolute
Identity of self and cosmos	Blissful isolation of soul
Union with God partly or fully immanent in the world	Union with God apart from the world
Luminous transfiguration of body and surroundings	Intense light and peace but no sense of the world
Noetic and unitive encounter with spirits at work in nature	Luminous vision of esteemed religious personage, plus *incidental* nature contents
Sense of time stopping, with profound insights into the universal process	Timeless and spaceless pure consciousness
Vision of world supported by supreme consciousness	Pure consciousness, plus *incidental* nature contents

Naming the Experiences

It is difficult to find an entirely satisfactory label for the experiences outlined in the preceding section. The term I have chosen to use here—extrovertive mystical experience—was introduced by W. T. Stace at the beginning of the 1960s, and it has been widely used since. However, the adoption of Stace's terminology does not entail a commitment to his understanding of the experiences. There is, for instance, no need to accept Stace's assumption that the extrovertive content of the experiences is always sense-mediated, the world seen 'through the eyes' as Stace put it (1960: 236). Stace took no notice of extrovertive experiences that take place when visual sense-impressions have been shut out, in sleep, meditation, near-death crisis, and other circumstances. For instance, we shall see that Warner Allen was drawn into unity with the universe when he closed his eyes during a Beethoven concert. In such cases, visual apprehension of the world cannot take place through ordinary sensory contact. Stace's neglect of non-sensory cases goes hand in hand with his failure to distinguish two meanings of 'extrovertive': experiences can be extrovertive in their *contents* and in the *way* they have come about. It is important to separate the two senses because

they do not necessarily go together. Experiences *with* extrovertive contents can follow from introvertive practices: the mystic shuts out sense-experience and looks within to discover the world anew. Conversely, experiences *with no* extrovertive contents can arise in extrovertive circumstances: the mystic contemplates the world in order to pass beyond it. To avoid confusion, it is advisable to be clear about the intended sense of 'extrovertive experience'. In the usage to be followed here, extrovertive experiences are extrovertive by their contents but not necessarily extrovertive by their circumstances. The natural world is always a mystical focus but need not be the setting, trigger, or means of cultivation.

Another common name for the experiences is *nature mystical experience*. Although 'nature' can have the required sense, denoting the universe of objects and processes, it also has a much curtailed sense in which it refers to the wilderness and countryside, in contradistinction to the human spheres of town, society, and culture.[1] The terms *nature mystic* and *nature mysticism* often carry the restricted meaning: nature mystics are portrayed as those who remove themselves to unspoilt places and lose themselves in the beauties of nature. It is true that extrovertive experiences often do take place in beautiful scenery, but they also occur in urban settings and drab surroundings, and they can have contents other than scenic nature at their focus, such as submicroscopic structures, man-made objects, human beings, and the cosmic whole. Extrovertive terminology is therefore preferable: it avoids the suggestion that nature scenery is invariably the setting and the contents of the experiences.

Other approximate equivalents have included the *cosmic consciousness* of Edward Carpenter and R. M. Bucke, W. R. Inge's *objective mystical experience*, Evelyn Underhill's *illuminated vision of the world*, Cuthbert Butler's *nature ecstasy*, Rudolf Otto's *unifying vision*, the *oceanic feeling* of Romain Rolland and Sigmund Freud, R. C. Zaehner's *natural*, *panenhenic*, or *pamphysistic mystical experience*, W. H. Auden's *vision of Dame Kind*, and Robert Forman's *unitive mystical state*. These alternatives are not ideal because they are too broad, too narrow, unhelpfully obscure, or carry questionable meanings and assumptions. Zaehner's 'natural mystical experience' suffers from the same difficulty as 'nature mystical experience'

[1] It is well recognized that the nature–culture contrast is not clear-cut, for humankind has long been a powerful force in the shaping of landscapes. Social constructivists have gone further, arguing that 'nature' exists only as a cultural and linguistic fabrication. See Macnaghten and Urry (1998), and Kidner (2000).

but is even more ambiguous. 'Natural' could suggest that the experiences are distinguished by their spontaneity: they are 'natural' rather than 'cultivated'. The experiences often do occur spontaneously, but there is also reason to believe that they are open to cultivation, as Zaehner recognized. 'Natural' could also mean that the experiences take place outside a religious context or without the grace of God: they are 'natural' rather than 'religious' or 'supernatural'. Zaehner insisted that the experiences have nothing to do with spiritual reality, and his term therefore carries two meanings. Natural mystical experience is mystical experience of the natural world, and it is mystical experience that has no spiritual or supernatural basis.

In what sense are the experiences 'mystical'? In modern times, the term has often been applied to experiences characterized by profound knowledge, unity, or a sense of contact with reality, although there has been no consensus over the precise application of the term amongst those who have used it to describe experiences. To complicate matters, 'mystical' and 'mysticism' have become strongly contested categories in recent years, and there has been much discussion of the 'modern construction of mysticism'.[2] But whatever the failings or merits of the term, 'mystical experience' is so well established in scholarly and popular discourse that its use is unavoidable.

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James stressed the noetic qualities of mystical experiences: they are 'states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect' ((1902) 1985: 380). More commonly, scholars have made 'unity' the defining characteristic. Stace classified experiences that lack the unitive characteristic as 'borderline' or at best 'incipient', and he believed they could be safely ignored (1961: 45–7, 81–4). Mystical experience is essentially unitive experience. The unitive requirement may be supplemented with a 'contact with reality' criterion. Mystical experience is said to have a *metaphysical* dimension: it involves, or leads subjects to believe that it involves, an encounter with deeper reality. In general, it may be claimed that mystical experience is experience that (1) involves a strong unitive element *and* (2) gives the impression that deeper facets of reality have been encountered (e.g. Ellwood 1999: 39).

Other scholars dispense with unity but retain the 'contact with reality' criterion. Carmody and Carmody (1996: 10) suggest 'direct experience of ultimate reality'. The unity criterion is sometimes

[2] For recent discussions, see King (1999: 7–34) and Schmidt (2003).

intentionally dropped because it is thought to serve a religious tradition poorly. Gershom Scholem, the pioneering scholar of Jewish mysticism, noted that 'union with God' is not representative of the ecstatic climaxes of many mystics, 'Jews as well as non-Jews' (1961: 5). Bernard McGinn has claimed that *presence* is more useful than unity for defining Christian mystical experience, which is a consciousness of the 'immediate or direct presence of God' (1992: xvi–xvii).

In older definitions of mysticism and in definitions tailored to suit theistic religions, the reality apprehended in mystical experience is often taken to be God. For instance, Rufus Jones defined mysticism as 'the type of religion which puts the emphasis on immediate awareness of relation with God, on direct and intimate consciousness of the Divine Presence' ((1909) 1936: xv). In definitions of nature mysticism, God has also figured prominently as the apprehended reality. Winslow Hall defines 'Illumination' as 'An overwhelming conviction of oneness with all things in God' (1937: 8). Edward Gall explains that 'The basic fact underlying all nature-mysticism . . . is Divine Immanence, the presence of God in the World' (1934: 192). According to Frank Sherwood Taylor, the fourth mode of apprehending the world is a 'vision of the whole universe, down to the moss and the stone, as the consequence of God's will and as actively fulfilling his purpose' (1945: 86–91). F. C. Happold's definition is a little broader: 'Nature-mysticism is characterized by a sense of the immanence of the One or God or soul in Nature' (1970: 43).

For present purposes, it is unnecessary to take a definitive position on what makes an experience 'mystical'. It has been sufficient to show that there is justification in common usage for applying 'mystical' to extrovertive experiences, for our 'feature list' includes the characteristics often taken to be defining, namely knowledge, unity, and contact with reality. There is no need to commit to a definition that equates 'mystical' with, say, 'unity' or 'contact with God', as these positions are unhelpfully restrictive. If the unitive criterion were applied strictly, an experience would not qualify as mystical if it brought, say, only a luminous transformation of the environment and a sense of well-being. However, the fact that luminosity and feelings of well-being often accompany the unitive, noetic, and reality characteristics suggests that it would be misleading to exclude the experience from the category. At the very least, we should be open to accepting it as a 'borderline' or 'incipient' mystical experience.

Types and Stages

Extrovertive phenomenology is quite varied. One subject reports unity with the environment and all-encompassing love; another describes a luminous transfiguration with feelings of bliss; yet another claims that all was understood and that past, present, and future came together. As we shall see, individual features also show considerable variation. For example, the visual transformation in one case is a light that pervades the surroundings, whilst in another it is a light that obliterates the surroundings. In another, visual experience acquires a cosmic range.

What is to be made of the differences? Some degree of variation can be put down to observational and descriptive differences. Even if subjects have very similar experiences, they may notice different facets or express the same features in very different ways, especially if the experiences are unfamiliar and defy easy description. However, some differences are too great to be explained in this way. There is a clear difference between a luminous suffusion of the immediate surroundings and a visual expansion of cosmic proportions. It is possible that we have set up one type of experience when really several *distinct types* should be distinguished. It is important to be alert to the possibility because distinct types may require very different explanations. The search for an overarching explanation would be misguided.

William Wainwright is unusual amongst writers on mysticism for claiming that several types of extrovertive mystical experiences must be recognized (1981: 41). To this end, he assembled five distinguishing features of extrovertive experience articulated by earlier scholars and looked for commonly reported combinations of the features. The procedure yielded three types: (1) a 'sense of the unity of nature, and of one's identity with it', often accompanied by luminous transfiguration and/or timelessness; (2) 'the sense of nature as a living presence'; (3) 'the sense that everything is transpiring in an eternal present' (1981: 33–6). Wainwright completed his extrovertive 'family' by adding a fourth type suggested to him by the Buddhist concept of emptiness.

Wainwright deserves credit for realizing that types of extrovertive experiences may need to be distinguished, although his procedure and results are best regarded as a first look at the question, rather than an attempt to establish firm conclusions. The task was approached through limited characterizations derived from Stace,

Zaehner, and Otto, and it is far from clear that the four types are properly distinct. Wainwright was well aware that his typology was impressionistic, and he outlined a systematic way of testing it: perform content analysis on a number of first-person extrovertive accounts in order to identify key features, employ cluster analysis to sort the features into groups, and see if the groups match the four types (1981: 51 n. 74). Wainwright recognized likely difficulties and limitations. The sample must be sufficiently large and varied to be representative, and the accounts should be detailed. Also, the initial criteria for selecting accounts will affect the outcome.

The search for distinct types needs to be approached with caution because experiences that diverge in their characteristics may be related at a deeper level. Differences may be superficial. This is suggested by experiences that develop through *stages*, with the stages exhibiting experiential variations that are also observed across separate experiences. The occurrence of variations in the course of *one* experience suggests that the variations are not fully distinct, have a common basis, and are justifiably grouped together. As stages, they are related to one another as expressions of a developing process and may therefore be subsumable under one explanatory model.

There are some impressive accounts of experiences that developed through stages.[3] For example, one of Bucke's subjects, C.M.C., related an experience that began with an appreciation of beauty in nature and the rightness of things, passed through stages of increasing depth, and culminated in a full-blown cosmic vision (Bucke (1901) 1989: 267–73). Her account begins with some autobiographical details, including a description of the prolonged search for meaning that preceded the experience. Eventually, C.M.C. was able to 'let go', and she experienced a relaxation of mind and body, a heightened appreciation of the beauty of nature, and a feeling that nothing was out of place in the world. As she went about her affairs, there was some altered luminosity, peace, joy, and a sense of presence. The 'life and joy within' continued to intensify, bringing restlessness, and C.M.C. retired early. She remarks that 'soon all objective phenomena were shut out', which may mean an exclusion of sensory experience. From here, the noetic

[3] For example, Wilmshurst (1928: 142–52), Ward (1957: 26–31), and Yogananda (1993: 166–8). David Spangler's childhood experience had four or five stages, beginning with an out-of-the-body expansion and culminating in a vision of the universe (May 1993: 298–300).

features deepened, with an appreciation of meaning and insights into suffering and spiritual evolution. The experience intensified further, with the sense of 'being enveloped, swallowed up'. At this point, with her customary sense of identity slipping away, the experience leapt to a still higher level, becoming an expansive vision of the unified cosmos.

C.M.C.'s experience and similar examples suggest that there is a connection between the simple cases and those with more complex phenomenologies: they may represent different stages of development. The former, if continued, might progress into the latter. Indeed, there are some cases in which an experience promises to develop but goes no further. Deeper realizations seem to be just out of reach. Margaret Prescott Montague felt that she had seen the significance of things but had not quite grasped what the significance was: 'If my heart could have seen just a little further I should have understood' (1916: 593). Raynor Johnson's correspondent, quoted at the beginning of the chapter, felt that greater revelations of the 'mystery of all life' awaited him, but despite his curiosity he felt unable to part the 'veil'.[4]

How Common is Extrovertive Experience?

For most individuals, extrovertive mystical experience is a rare occurrence. Subjects typically report only one, two, or three episodes, but there are exceptions. Although uncommon for individuals, extrovertive experience seems to be fairly common across the population, at least in those cultures in which the incidence of religious and mystical experience has been investigated. Only provisional observations are possible, for survey studies have not yet specifically addressed extrovertive experience. Nevertheless, it seems that small but significant proportions of the US and UK populations have had some kind of awareness of *unity* with the world, one of the indicative features of extrovertive experience. Whilst extrovertive unity is by no means the most commonly reported feature of spiritual experiences, it still occurs in a substantial number of cases. In Andrew Greeley's US study of a national sample of approximately 1,460 respondents, 35% answered positively to the question 'Have you ever felt as though you were very

[4] For other examples, see Beardsworth (1977: 55–6).

close to a powerful, spiritual force that seemed to lift you out of yourself' (1975: 58). Of these, 29% had experiences that could be described by the phrase 'a sense of the unity of everything and my own part in it' (1975: 65). This represents 10% of the total sample, which would suggest that at the time of the survey, in 1973, one in ten of the US population had some acquaintance with extrovertive unity. Other 'descriptors' employed in the Greeley study also turn up in extrovertive accounts, although some are not specific to extrovertive experiences. Examples include 'a feeling of deep and profound peace' (19% of the total sample), 'a certainty that all things would work out for the good' (17%), 'a conviction that love is at the center of everything' (15%), 'a great increase in my understanding and knowledge' (11%), 'the sense that all the universe is alive' (9%), and 'a sense that I was being bathed in light' (5%).

In the UK, Alister Hardy and his co-workers collected accounts of religious experience through media appeals and pamphlets. An analysis of the first 3,000 accounts revealed that 5.9% described a *feeling of unity with surroundings and/or with other people* in conjunction with 'sensory or quasi-sensory' visual contents (Hardy 1979: 35). A *sense of harmony, order, unity* with no intensification of sensory contents was described by 6.7% (1979: 58). In a qualitative study of religious experiences amongst PGCE students at Nottingham University, David Hay found that amongst 101 experiences reported by 73 informants, 9.9% were classifiable as *experience of a unity with nature* and 18.8% as *awareness of a presence in nature* (1979: 167). Hay and Heald (1987) included questions in a Gallup survey to assess the frequency of spiritual experiences in the British population. Of the total sample of 985, only 5% admitted to *experiencing that all things are one* and 16% to *an awareness of a sacred presence in nature*. In Gordon Heald's more recent survey of 1,000 respondents, the latter figure had increased to 29% (Heald 2000). All types of spiritual experience included in the survey showed a marked increase over the 1987 results, which probably reflects an increased willingness to admit to spiritual experiences rather than an upsurge in their occurrence.

The survey results obtained by Greeley in the USA and by Hay and Heald in the UK suggest that extrovertive experience is by no means uncommon in the two populations, but it is important to recognize that the survey figures quoted above say nothing about the intensity or depth of experience. It is possible that many instances of extrovertive unity registered in survey studies are very mild in

comparison with the dramatic experiences that tend to be recorded in first-person accounts. Greeley recognized the problem when he noted that his survey question may not have distinguished between 'real ecstasy' and 'heightened emotion' (1975: 77): one may 'feel "taken out of oneself"' by a taste of juicy steak or a Beethoven symphony or a rock music group' in a way that hardly compares to the intense experiences described in studies of religious and mystical experience, such as James's *Varieties*.

Is Extrovertive Experience a Modern Western Phenomenon?

It is likely that social, economic, religious, intellectual, aesthetic, and literary currents in the West have created an atmosphere congenial to the occurrence and reporting of extrovertive experience. Of primary importance is the Romantic movement in European and American thought, which from the late eighteenth century encouraged an openness towards nature as a source of spiritual regeneration. The wilds were no longer to be avoided as ugly and dangerous: they were to be valued as a place of retreat from an industrializing society increasingly estranged from nature. Romantic literature was informed by, gave expression to, and stimulated moments of heightened contact with the world, a revelatory 'Moment' or *Augenblick* (Jephcott 1972; Abrams 1973: 385–90). Some Romantic writers, including William Blake (1757–1827), William Wordsworth (1770–1850), and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82), seem to have known the experiences themselves.[5] Reminiscing on the background to his 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality', Wordsworth recalled the childhood experiences that helped to inspire the poem:

> I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or a tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality. (Grosart 1876: iii. 194)

[5] In response to Zaehner's scepticism, Paffard (1973: 36–48) makes a case for Wordsworth's mystical credentials. Some have found indications of firsthand mystical inspiration in Emerson's writings, including *Nature* (1836), with its striking 'transparent eyeball' passage (Emerson 1983: 10).

Fearful of these revelatory moments in childhood, Wordsworth came to regret their disappearance in later life.

Romantic philosophy and literature disseminated ideas about nature and perception that shaded into the mystical. Unity was a keyword: the unity of subject and object, of self and world, in the creative act of perception, and the organic unity of nature in which humankind is a part. Reintegration with the spiritual whole—the *All-Einheit* ('All-Unity') or *hen kai pan* ('One and All')—was a goal to which the alienated self of the Romantic poet aspired. Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) put it thus in his novel *Hyperion* (1797–9):

> To be one with all—this is the life divine, this is man's heaven.
>
> To be one with all that lives, to return in blessed self-forgetfulness into the All of Nature—this is the pinnacle of thoughts and joys, this the sacred mountain peak, the place of eternal rest, where the noonday loses its oppressive heat and the thunder its voice and the boiling sea is as the heaving field of grain. (Hölderlin 1990: 3)

But the feeling of oneness was all too unstable, and unity with the totality could seem despairingly out of reach and perhaps ultimately unattainable, an ideal to be sought rather than a fully realizable possibility.

Personal aspiration towards unity with the All in God or the Self was complemented by intellectual appreciation of unity in nature, pursued in metaphysical (idealism) and scientific (*Naturphilosophie*) speculations, and in Germany it had a political dimension too in the longing for national unity. Also significant was the idea of a Ground common to nature and the soul, a source that could be approached through a 'universal sense' (*All-Sinn*) that had all but vanished, except in special states arising from the unconscious, the psychological counterpart of the metaphysical Ground (Ellenberger 1970: 204). The prelapsarian vision of nature, undistorted by habit and custom, was equated with the unjaded perception of the child, a common Romantic motif, although one that drew on venerable sources, especially the New Testament (Abrams 1973: 379–84). Mystics who seemed to have insight into the Ground and its relation with the universe, notably Jakob Böhme (1575–1624) and Meister Eckhart (*c.*1260–?1328), were revived and esteemed by Romantic and idealist thinkers (Benz 1983; Weeks 1993; Mayer 1999). Furthermore, Romanticism gave impetus to the study of religious experience by placing it at the heart of religion. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) elevated 'feeling' above morality and

metaphysics as the essence of religion, and he stands at the head of a line of thinkers who gave pride of place to the experiential dimension of religion, such as William James, Rudolf Otto, and Joachim Wach.[6] When combined with the scientific demand for empirical data, the turn to religious experience encouraged the collection and study of testimonies, including testimonies of extrovertive experience.

Is extrovertive mystical experience, then, a purely modern Western phenomenon, nurtured by Romantic poets, artists, and philosophers, and by their immediate predecessors in the eighteenth century, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau? The answer is probably 'No': it is likely that extrovertive experience predates its Romantic expressions, although definitive evidence is hard to find. Study of the experiences in other cultures and historical periods is difficult because most first-person accounts derive from Western sources over the last hundred and fifty years. In this domain, the growth of autobiographical literature and the emergence of empirical research have encouraged subjects to record their experiences and make them available. There is a need for data from further afield, although it is probably increasingly difficult to find sources that have escaped Western cultural influence.

Scholars have held differing opinions on the incidence and importance of extrovertive experience across cultures and historical periods. Zaehner believed that the experiences have occurred everywhere and have been influential on religious philosophy, particularly in India. According to Zaehner, parts of the *Upaniṣads* depict the experience as the 'ultimate goal of religion', and yoga techniques were available for its achievement (1958: 56). Zaehner also equated Zen enlightenment and extrovertive experience, although he noted that the former is cultivated through rigorous training whilst the latter usually takes place without preparation. Stace took extrovertive experience to be cross-cultural, but he was unaware of any techniques for its cultivation, and he considered it to be of little

[6] It is noteworthy that the essence of religion was, for the younger, more radical, Schleiermacher ('On the Essence of Religion', 1799), a combined feeling-intuition of the *universe*, not principally a feeling of God or the later 'absolute dependence' on God. The more theistic understanding comes to the fore in the revised edition of 1806 (see Crouter 1988: 64–8). In the original, Schleiermacher's attempt to convey the essential 'moment' of religious experience has an extrovertive ring: 'I lie on the bosom of the infinite world. At this moment I am its soul, for I feel all its powers and its infinite life as my own; at this moment it is my body, for I penetrate its muscles and its limbs as my own, and its innermost nerves move according to my sense and my presentiment as my own' (Schleiermacher (1799) 1988: 113).

significance in the history of religious thought. Philip Almond has also downplayed the historical importance of extrovertive experience (1982: 71–2). He recommended that a methodological principle be adopted for presumed extrovertive texts in religious traditions. We should assume that the experiences behind extrovertive expressions in texts are *not* themselves extrovertive unless the authors make clear how the form of expression coincides with the personal experience. Almond advocated this 'autobiographical principle' because he believed that extrovertive expression in religious contexts derives not from extrovertive experience but from religious philosophy or from philosophical reflection subsequent to an interior type of experience (1982: 28–30, 122, 141). Almond was right to insist on caution, but his caution was one-sided: all forms of mystical expression in religious texts, not just extrovertive expression, should be treated with circumspection, for philosophical sources and interpretative impositions are a possibility in all cases.

There is some evidence that extrovertive experience is no recent, localized phenomenon. In the older literature, there are some suggestive personal descriptions, although it is true that few examples, if any, are clear-cut and incontrovertible. Amongst the Protestant mystics, Jakob Böhme, George Fox (1624–91), Thomas Traherne (1637–74), Jonathan Edwards (1703–58), William Blake, and Jacob Bower (1786–?1857) furnish accounts of the world experienced anew.[7] Böhme's first major illumination came in 1600 when he was struggling with melancholic thoughts on the remoteness of God, the insignificance of man, and the problem of evil in the world. Embraced by love, he saw through all things and knew God in all creatures, even in the 'herbs and grass' (*Aurora* XIX. 11–13). Reputedly, the experience began indoors, triggered by the sight of a pewter vessel, and brought insights into nature when Böhme ventured outside.

In the *Centuries*, Traherne tells of his childhood vision of the world in the divine light that accompanied him from birth. The trees were ravishingly beautiful, the dust of the streets as precious as gold, the inhabitants like angels (III. 3). The prose passages in the *Centuries* are deservedly celebrated for their beauty, and, along with parallels in verse form, such as 'The Salutation' and 'Wonder', have created the impression that Traherne is a poet of mystically transformed nature and of the unsullied childhood vision, subsequently

[7] The texts are brought together in Fremantle's anthology (1964).

lost through the corrupting influences of society and an unsupportive education. However, Traherne was not a 'nature mystic' in the narrow sense. His vision went beyond the immediate environment of countryside and town, expanding into the greater world and taking in all 'kingdoms' and 'ages'. When Traherne recovered the vision in his twenties, he discovered that all was well: 'All Things were well in their Proper Places, I alone was out of frame and had need to be Mended' (*Centuries* III. 60, in Traherne 1958: i. 145).

Amongst the Catholic mystics, Angela of Foligno (?1248–1309), Julian of Norwich (1342–?1416), and Ignatius Loyola (?1491–1556) had experiences that can be construed as extrovertive,[8] and from childhood, Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179) had episodes of 'soul expansion' that may have been extrovertive, or at least clairvoyant:

> And as God wills, in this vision my spirit mounts upwards, into the height of the firmament and into changing air, and dilates itself among different nations, even though they are in far-off regions and places remote from me. (Dronke 1984: 168)

Although the *visio* occurs when Hildegard's eyes are open, she does not take it to be a sensory experience. It occurs in Hildegard's soul, probably in connection with the lesser of the two interior luminosities she describes, the 'shadow of the living brightness'. The deeper luminosity, the 'living light', is perhaps more clearly mystical, for it brings Hildegard true peace. Perhaps one of the better extrovertive candidates in the pre-modern literature is the subtle vision described by Teresa of Ávila (1515–82), a non-sensory 'intellectual vision'. Teresa sees how all things are contained in God: the Godhead is like a great diamond or mirror that contains everything. She is disturbed to find that all reprehensible actions are displayed in the clear, pure depths of the diamond, including her own sins. The vision is additionally disturbing in consequence of its sheer magnitude: Teresa is terrified to see 'so many things at once' (Peers 1946: i. 293–4; see also ii. 321–2).

Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) is often dubbed a 'nature mystic', although it has been argued that the creation was not the focus of mystical vision in Franciscan spirituality but a contemplative point of departure towards the apprehension of God. Andrew

[8] Angela's vision of 'the fullness of God' (Lachance 1993: 169–70); Julian's vision of 'all that is made', a little thing the size of a hazelnut and round as a ball (Beer 1998: 29–30); Ignatius's noetic experience by the river near Manresa (Olin 1992: 39–40).

Cunningham has pressed the point strongly: 'this route of ecstatic contemplation did not take the Franciscan nearer the creatures, but *further away* from them' (2000: 626). Hermann Joseph (born *c.*1150) is said to have attained to a 'perfect knowledge of creation': gazing at the night sky, Joseph longed to view the creation as God sees it and was granted a revelation of 'the whole beauty and glory of the firmament and of every created thing' (Poulain 1921: 278). In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) has his pilgrim self apprehend the unity of an ordinarily fragmented world as he nears the end of his journey through the afterlife realms. In the eternal light, Love binds together the dispersed 'leaves' of the universe into one 'volume' (*Paradiso* XXXIII. 85–93). The description is couched in the scholastic terminology of 'substance' and 'accident', and may express contemporary mystical philosophy rather than an experience the author may have had.

In the *Dialogues* of Pope Gregory I (*c.*540–604), composed around 593, Saint Benedict (*c.*480–547) is credited with a luminous vision of the world: 'the whole world, as though gathered up under a single ray of the sun, was brought before his eyes' (Book 2, XXXV; Uhlfelder 1967: 44–6). The experience also brought clairvoyant vision of an ascending soul. Gregory's partner in the dialogue, Peter, has not had the experience himself and is astounded: 'How can the whole world become visible to a single man?'[9] Gregory banishes the monk's puzzlement: when the soul is caught up in the light of God, it is able to see the creation, for caught up in God the soul sees everything below God.[10]

Apart from experiences recounted by or attributed to historical personalities, pre-modern indications of extrovertive experience can be detected in religious texts that raise visionary, noetic, or unitive experience of the world in the context of meditative practices. For instance, it may be supposed that some passages in the Taoist *Chuang-tzu* (fourth century BCE) are informed by unitive experience

[9] Or a single woman—there is a hint of Benedict's vision in the spiritual biography of Christina of Markyate (d. 1160), who, descending from a vision of the queen of heaven and the angels, 'saw in one flash the whole wide world' (Talbot 1959: 111). Note also the monk of Wenlock's 'near-death experience', recorded by St Boniface in 716, which began with a cosmic vision: 'when the veil of the flesh was cast aside the whole universe seemed to be brought together before his eyes so that he saw in one view all parts of the earth and all seas and peoples' (Emerton 1940: 25).

[10] See McGinn (1995: 71–4, 450 n. 264). The vision, if not the explanation, is often traced to Graeco-Roman sources, including Cicero and Boethius (e.g. Courcelle 1967; Bell 1977).

of the world. However, the passages could be expressions of speculative philosophy, with no experiential inspiration behind them. Indeed, one authority has advocated a non-mystical, 'philosophy of language' interpretation (e.g. Hansen 1983).[11] However, in the *Chuang-tzu*, the sage's attainment of harmony with the cosmic flow is dependent on the shedding of divisive conceptualizations, a practice that does seem to be conducive towards the experiences. Similar ideas and practices recur in East Asian religion, including Ch'an Buddhism and its developments.

Aspiration towards cosmic wholeness is evident too in the Greek and Roman worlds, although scholarly debate wanders inconclusively over the question of mystical inspiration. For instance, Parmenides' description of the vision of the eternal whole may have drawn on mystical insight, but it can also be interpreted as literary garnishing on a purely philosophical argument, drawing on the mythic and cosmological imagery of the time. Similarly, Plato's myths of cosmic ascent have invited mystical interpretation, and his picture of the soul striving to embrace the human and the divine in their entirety, all time and all reality, is suggestive (*Republic* 486a), but decisive evidence of a basis in personal experience is lacking. Following the Presocratic and Platonic precedents, a strong current of cosmic sentiment flows through Greek and Roman philosophical thought. In Epicurean, Stoic, and Hermetic writings, aspiration towards cosmic wholeness is expressed: world-encompassing dilation of the soul in an all-embracing expansion of thought is affirmed as a way of placing mundane concerns in perspective, including petty ambitions and the fear of death. These aspirations towards 'greatness of soul' in the cosmic totality, which the classical scholar Pierre Hadot (1995: 208) finds summarized in Seneca's words *Toti se inserens mundo* ('plunging oneself into the totality of the world'), may sometimes point to more than elevated feelings brought on by the grandeur of nature or the inspiring notion of world citizenship. Several passages are, on the surface, suggestive of extrovertive experience, with their calls to embrace the world throughout space and time. Some can be explained as reformulations of Plato's cosmic sentiment adapted to new philosophical forms, including Epicurean atomism and Stoic doctrines of divine permeation and material interpenetration. There is, for instance, no need to invoke

[11] Clarke (2000: 140–65) summarizes a number of scholarly opinions on Taoism and mystical experience.

extrovertive experience to explain the soul expansion described by the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121–80 CE), which can be interpreted as an adaptation of the Platonic world vision to the Stoic cosmology of infinite void and world cycles (*Meditations* XI. 1).

In some cases, however, cosmic expansiveness is linked with meditative practices, such as the Hermetic exercise in which the self is urged to encompass the world as it exists in the mind of God (*Corpus Hermeticum* XI. 20).[12] Similarly, there is reason to believe that the Plotinian understanding of cosmic vision is not a purely theoretical affair (see Wallis 1976). Plotinus (205–70 CE) discloses that he rose to and fell from the intellectual vision of the cosmos 'many times' (*Enneads* IV. 8. 1). Furthermore, he believes that the vision is encouraged by spiritual disciplines, including a contemplative practice that begins with a visualization of the sensible universe in its totality and complexity, proceeds through a dematerialization and despatialization of the spherical cosmic image, and then calls upon God to enter, bringing the intelligible universe with him (V. 8. 9. 1; see Rappe 2000: 103–6). The characteristics of the Plotinian intellectual vision are suggestive of experiences that we would nowadays call 'mystical': wholeness, subject–object unity, intuitive and inclusive knowing, reality, light, transparency, beauty, power, bliss, life, and eternity.

But is the Plotinian intellectual vision properly 'extrovertive'? Although the vision is undoubtedly introvertive *by path*, being an interior experience reached by a withdrawal from the senses,[13] it can still be regarded as extrovertive *by contents* if it reveals the universe in its depths. The vision does indeed reveal cosmic reality, but Plotinus' treatment is rooted in Platonism, which makes a distinction between the universe of sensory vision and the universe of intellectual vision. It is therefore open to debate whether the intellectual vision is properly extrovertive since its object is not the universe we ordinarily know, but the realm of Forms from which the sensible world derives. Plotinus holds to the Platonic two-world distinction but perhaps attenuates it in his vivid portrayal of the intelligible cosmos, which is no mere static repository of abstract,

[12] See Dodds (1965: 81–3) on the passage as an ancient expression of extrovertive mystical experience.

[13] For this reason, Wallis (1976: 122–3) finds extrovertive terminology inappropriate for the intellectual vision, although he acknowledges the experiential similarities. Bussanich (1994: 5309–10; 1997: 357) recognizes a Plotinian experience of the sensory cosmos as well as the better-known intellectual vision, and he tentatively applies 'nature mystical' and 'extrovertive' terminology to the former.

universal ideas. It has sometimes been remarked that the Plotinian two worlds are best understood as one world viewed in two different ways.[14] If this assessment is justifiable, then the Plotinian cosmic vision would indeed qualify as extrovertive.

The sensible–intelligible distinction also informs and complicates the treatment of cosmic vision within Christian, Jewish, and Islamic mystical thought, if the apprehension of all things takes place in a higher, archetypal realm, or even in the Godhead itself, in which things rest in a pre-existent condition. Nevertheless, expansive vision of the ordinary world could be recognized and esteemed, as in Gregory's portrayal of Benedict's experience. Some Sufi mystical thinkers regarded the unitive vision of the world grounded in its divine source (*baqā'*, 'subsistence') as superior to consciousness of God alone (*fanā'*, 'annihilation') (see Knysh 2000: 309–11).

Suggestions of extrovertive experience have been detected in Indian thought, for instance, by Zaehner in the *Upaniṣads*. Kṛṣṇa's revelation of his cosmic form to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (Book XI) has been viewed similarly. Further suggestions are to be found in Indian doctrines of omniscience (*sarvajña*) that attribute complete knowledge and vision of the world to human beings, a possibility that was by no means universally accepted in Indian thought. The state of omniscience was sometimes denied completely or reserved for divinity, or understood in a restricted way. Early Buddhism attributed omniscience to the Buddha, understood as the ability to recall past lives, observe beings traversing the round of existence under the force of karma, and know the destruction of the defilements that bind beings to the cycle of rebirth. The Buddha's omniscience was therefore the ability to acquire specific items of knowledge, especially knowledge conducive towards liberation (Naughton 1991; Griffiths 1994: 168–73). It was not explained as a complete, all-in-one cognition of everything in the world. Jainism, by contrast, gave prominence to the idea of complete omniscience: it is a tenet of Jain philosophy that every soul has intrinsic knowledge and vision of all things, a supreme knowledge called *kevalajñāna*. This effortless knowledge is usually hidden under karmic obscurations, but it can be uncovered by spiritual practice. The soul in its pure condition is mirror-like, being able to view external objects through reflection in the soul (Jaini 1979: 266–7).

[14] Armstrong made the point repeatedly (e.g. 1984: 46–8). But note Bussanich's reservations (1994: 5313 n. 31).

In some later Indian developments, vastly expanded experience of the world was understood without the sharp division between soul and external world present in the Jain account. In the Hindu sphere, a highly sophisticated treatment is to be found in nondual Kashmir Śaivism (from the ninth century CE). Abhinavagupta (*fl. c.*975–1025) explains that the entire universe exists in the consciousness of Śiva, like images in a mirror, but the images are not reflections of external objects because there are no objects external to consciousness (Singh 1982: 18–19; Dyczkowski 1987: 66–8). There is only the supreme consciousness and its contents. The devotee is able to share in the universal knowledge and vision through a basic identity with Śiva. Levels of cosmic visionary experience are recognized in the doctrines of the five pure *tattvas* ('principles') and the seven *pramātṛs* ('experiencers'), ontological, cosmogonic, soteriological, and experiential levels distinguished by varying degrees of subject–object differentiation (e.g. Muller-Ortega 1996). Realization of Śiva consciousness can be attained by several means. The most straightforward method depends on the elimination of the discriminative thinking that misconstrues the nature of reality and one's place in it. More complex methods work explicitly with the cosmic power latent in the human body, raising the *kuṇḍalinī* energy coiled near the base of the spine to higher centres in the subtle anatomy. When the highest centre is activated, human consciousness opens out into the cosmos (Silburn 1988: 30–1).

An oceanic vision of totality is described at length in the Indian Mahayana Buddhist *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (first century BCE to second century CE) and systematized in the nondual philosophy of Chinese Hua-yen Buddhism (from sixth century CE). The meditative experience of the interpenetrating cosmos ascribed here to the Buddha at his enlightenment and to advanced practitioners has been known as *sāgaramudrā samādhi* or 'ocean-seal concentration'. The mind, with its superficially agitated motions quietened, is likened to the great, waveless surface of a calm ocean, a mirror-like surface in which all things are imaged with extreme sharpness. In accordance with the nondual tendencies of later Buddhist thought, the 'images' are not considered separate from the mind in which they appear.

In the Buddhist and Bon traditions of Tibet, a transitional stage between death and rebirth is said to bring cosmic visions. After the 'Clear Light' manifests at the end of the first stage of dying, a second stage unfolds, the so-called 'intermediate state of reality'. In the more detailed expositions, this state of 'reality' (*dharmatā*) is said

to culminate in a total vision that includes mandalas of peaceful and wrathful deities, pure Buddha realms, and the impure realms of cyclic existence (e.g. Orofino 1990: 45–50; see Sogyal Rinpoche 1992: 274–86). The *dharmatā* visions are not confined to the death transition: they are cultivated through advanced meditations that prepare practitioners for death and enlightenment.

Although traditional ideas of the kind touched upon above are suggestive, their connection with extrovertive experience as it is encountered in modern testimonies will remain conjectural unless descriptively rich, first-person accounts from the traditions can be found for comparative study. Spiritual autobiography has been encouraged in some religious traditions, and so there may be opportunities for comparative research. For example, the personal records of Ch'an and Tibetan Buddhists may allow some historical and cross-cultural comparisons. The following passage, from the training record of the thirteenth-century Ch'an master Hsüeh-yen Tsu-ch'in, may be a case in point, for it seems to describe a transfigured vision of the world and contains some interesting details:

> I came back into the hall and was about to go to my seat when the whole outlook changed. A broad expanse opened, and the ground appeared as if all caved in. The experience was beyond description and altogether incommunicable, for there was nothing in the world to which it could be compared. . . . As I looked around and up and down, the whole universe with its multitudinous sense-objects now appeared quite different; what was loathsome before, together with ignorance and passions, was now seen to be nothing else but the outflow of my own inmost nature which in itself remained bright, true, and transparent. This state of consciousness lasted for more than half a month. (Suzuki 1970: 118)

However, comparative work is best left to specialists in the traditions, who are sensitive to doctrinal references in the testimonies and who are not at the mercy of translations, which may mislead by importing modern modes of extrovertive expression. Although fraught with difficulties, comparative study is important because it bears directly on the explanation of extrovertive experience, as we shall see in later chapters. If experiences are found to vary dramatically across traditions and cultures, then the influence of context is strongly implicated. If striking commonalities are observed, then universal biological, psychological, or transpersonal factors are probably at work.

Study of historical precedents is also significant because it appears to show that extrovertive experience was esteemed in some religious

traditions. Extrovertive experience has not merely been the inspiration of moderns who hoped to nourish enlightened spiritualities outside the constraints of ossified religion. From the distant past, we can catch echoes of extrovertive experience in traditional religious teachings and in the testimonies of a few religious mystics; in modern times, stories of extrovertive experience come to us from both religious and non-religious directions, from those comfortable within traditional religions, from those set on more individualistic spiritual paths, and from agnostics and atheists who had not considered themselves to be on any spiritual path at all. Extrovertive experience can be 'churched' or 'unchurched'.

Although it is often unclear whether religious philosophies have drawn inspiration from extrovertive mystical insights, study of the systems is nonetheless useful for uncovering ideas that could be used to explain the experiences. With their pre-modern origins, the philosophies provide a counterpoint to those modern psychological and biological explanations that exclude or set aside the possibility of a transpersonal basis. In fact, we shall see that several modern theorists were influenced by traditional ideas. Inge based his explanation on Plotinian philosophy (Chapter 4). Stace was inspired by doctrines of the unconditioned Absolute (Chapter 5). Several thinkers have turned to concepts of nonduality to be found in the *Chuang-tzu*, Sufi mysticism, Yogācāra philosophy, Zen, and tantric Buddhist and Hindu religion (Chapter 6), and Carpenter benefited specifically from contact with a Śaiva teacher who emphasized non-differentiation (Chapter 4). In the unlikely event that none of these venerable religious sources derived any stimulus from extrovertive experience, they still lend themselves to use by modern theorists.

2
'Being All, Knowing All, Loving All'
Phenomenology

Extrovertive mystical experience shares many features with everyday experience. We all have some sense of what it is to know, to understand, to love, to appreciate beauty, to be joyful and at peace, and most of us have felt the sense of individual selfhood relax a little, whether in nature, loving relationships, group affiliations, or moments of intoxication. However, extrovertive experience raises the familiar to new heights and takes it in novel directions. These mystical departures from the ordinary were introduced in the previous chapter, and now they will come under closer scrutiny.

There is much to be gained by taking a look at previous characterizations of extrovertive experience. Bucke made a commendable effort to gather and analyse accounts, but he was indiscriminate in his choice of cases and read them in the light of his own experience. Otto identified several kinds of unity, but he made no use of detailed, first-person accounts and drew instead on mystical philosophy. Stace too was overly influenced by mystical philosophy, and, although he quoted some first-person writings, he paid insufficient attention to them. Zaehner chose examples that would reflect badly on the moral status of extrovertive mysticism, and, like Bucke, he took his own experience as representative. Previous characterizations have had serious methodological flaws, and individually they give a rather patchy sense of extrovertive experience. We shall see that one commonly recognized characteristic (unity) has been portrayed in disparate ways, that other characteristics (knowledge, light, time) have received uneven treatment, and that one important characteristic (love) has been neglected. Nevertheless, the classic treatments bring out some important features. Together they portray a phenomenological richness that explanatory efforts have failed to address, and they can be used as a starting point for a more rounded appreciation of extrovertive characteristics.

To work towards a more nuanced picture, I read through a large number of extrovertive accounts, looking out for commonalities,

variants, and previously overlooked characteristics. More detailed analysis would certainly have been possible, and a larger body of accounts could have been used, but the summary given below is sufficient for the present purpose, which is to give an overview of extrovertive phenomenology that is concise yet sufficiently detailed to allow the evaluation of explanations in Part II. Explanations that fail to address the range of characteristics adequately are misguided or in need of revision and development.

Classic Characterizations

The modern literature on mysticism contains many characterizations of mystical experience, but few pay specific attention to extrovertive phenomenology.[1] Bucke's 1901 study of cosmic consciousness contained the first systematic characterization, and Otto's work on unifying vision a quarter of a century later proved influential, supplying Stace with some key ideas about extrovertive phenomenology. Writing in the late 1950s and the 1960s, Zaehner and Stace were the last to make substantial contributions. Since then extrovertive phenomenology has not attracted much attention, reflecting the general neglect of extrovertive experience in recent decades.

BUCKE: 'COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS'

In the introduction to *Cosmic Consciousness*, Bucke explains that the prime characteristic is a 'consciousness of the cosmos, that is, of the life and order of the universe' ((1901) 1989: 2). It is the first of several 'elements':

- consciousness of the cosmos
- intellectual enlightenment or illumination
- indescribable feeling of elevation, elation, and joyousness
- a quickening of the moral sense
- a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life[2]

[1] For instance, William James's marks—ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity—are intended to cover all mystical experiences. For recent general characterizations, see Franks Davis (1989: 54–65) and Hollenback (1996: 40–119).

[2] For an early version of the list, see Bucke's letter to Horace Traubel dated 20 March 1892, items 15 to 19 (Lozynsky 1977: 182–3).

Bucke goes on to describe eleven 'marks' ((1901) 1989: 60–3, 65–6), although he wisely cautions the reader that the characterization is based on only a few cases. The first seven marks describe the experience itself (Table 2.1), whereas the remainder are concerned largely with circumstances and consequences.

Bucke claims that it is impossible to describe the intellectual illumination but reiterates insights that he attributed to his 1872 experience. These include the realization that the cosmos is not dead matter but a living presence: it is 'an infinite ocean of life' ((1901) 1989: 61). The experience discloses the immortality of life and soul, love as the foundation principle of the world, and the eventual happiness of all. There is also an understanding of the world in its totality ('a conception of THE WHOLE'), the prime characteristic identified by Bucke in the introduction and now included under 'intellectual illumination'.

Bucke's attempt to measure his collection of cases against the marks is fairly systematic, although the analyses are often strained or conjectural. For instance, in the case of Jesus, Bucke has little

TABLE 2.1 Bucke's characterization of cosmic consciousness

Feature	Description
Subjective light	A 'sense of being immersed in a flame, or rose-colored cloud, or perhaps rather a sense that the mind is itself filled with such a cloud or haze'.
Moral elevation	Predominantly an emotional response to the experience that includes joy, assurance, triumph, and 'salvation'.
Intellectual illumination	Bucke's term for the understanding and insights brought by the experience.
Sense of immortality	Bucke claims that intellectual illumination reveals the survival and immortality of the individual soul.
Loss of the fear of death	The fear of death vanishes as a result of the illumination rather than through a process of reasoning.
Loss of the sense of sin	The world is found to be empty of sin.
Instantaneousness	The awakening is like 'a dazzling flash of lightning in a dark night, bringing the landscape which had been hidden into clear view'.

Source: Bucke ((1901) 1989: 60–3, 65–6).

evidence of the prime characteristic and comments weakly: 'Presumably we have intellectual illumination' ((1901) 1989: 92). Although Bucke's observations on predisposing circumstances are highly suspect (see Chapter 3), his experiential characterization has merit, probably because it draws on his own experience. Bucke identifies some relatively common features, including luminosity, understanding, love, joy, and the knowledge that all will turn out for the good. Other features are less readily generalizable, notably the knowledge of *personal* survival, which is rarely mentioned, although subjects do sometimes comment on a fearlessness that includes indifference towards death.[3] Bucke mentions love, but his formulation is rather intellectual: he has the mystic recognize love as the foundation principle of the world but omits to note that the mystic can feel intensely loving and loved. Bucke's characterization of the luminosity as a rose-coloured haze or cloud, based on his own experience, needs to be qualified, for the phenomenology is much more varied. There is also no mention of altered time-sense. Most striking is Bucke's failure to include the mystic's sense of merger with the whole. Bucke describes an intellectual consciousness *of* the whole, not unity *with* the whole. It is a significant omission, given the frequency with which unitive merger is reported. In Bucke's collection, which contains few extrovertive accounts, the feature is not prominently represented, although there are explicit indications in the extracts Bucke took from Edward Carpenter's writings. Surprisingly, merger with nature was also neglected sixty years later by Stace. There was no excuse for Stace's omission because one of his chief sources, Otto, had acknowledged the unity of perceiver and perceived, and Zaehner had recently discussed the nature mystic's sense of unity with the natural world.

OTTO: 'UNIFYING VISION'

Otto distinguishes two categories of mystical experience, the inward and outward ways. The latter, the way of 'Unifying Vision', is equivalent to extrovertive experience, although Otto distinguishes unifying vision from the 'nature mysticism' of the poets and Romantics, which he dismisses for its emotionalism ((1932) 1987:

[3] e.g. RERC (Beardsworth 1977: 16), Owens (Coxhead 1985: 35), May (1993: ix), RERC 2668 (Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 134), Bingham (Corcoran 1996: 131), and Austin (1998: 538).

76–9). Like Bucke's faculty of cosmic consciousness, Otto's unifying vision is noetic: it 'looks upon the world of things in its multiplicity' with an intuition or knowledge of its unity. However, the epistemologies are very different: Bucke's knowledge of the whole results from an evolutionary complexification of simpler mental operations, whereas Otto's knowledge of unity is an intrinsic, Kantian-like intuition (see Chapter 4). For Otto, the unifying vision has two components, sensory vision of the world and a priori knowledge of the world's unity, so that there is an inner knowledge of an outer unity. Later scholars, including Stace and Wainwright, continued to assume that the nature contents of extrovertive experience are purely sensory.

Otto postulates three formal stages of unifying vision, and, relying on Plotinus and Eckhart, discerns five characteristics in the first stage (Table 2.2). In the first stage, the Many are primary but are unified in various ways: unity of things in a whole (Bucke's prime characteristic); the paradoxical identity of things; inclusion in an eternal Now; the identity of the perceiver and the perceived. First-stage unity is dependent on the Many, for it consists of the integration of the Many in the whole and in the Eternal Now, the identity relations between the Many, and the identity of the perceiver with the Many.

In the second stage, the unity has a distinct reality of its own as 'The One', and 'takes precedence' as that 'which is superior and

TABLE 2.2 Otto's characterization of first-stage unifying vision

Feature	Description
Wholeness	Things are experienced together as an All, a whole, a One.
Paradoxical identity of things	A relation of identity that defies ordinary logic.
Eternal Now	Negation of the usual type of association of things in space and time, replaced by an ordering in a higher way, in the Eternal Now.
Transfiguration	Things are transfigured, becoming 'transparent, luminous, visionary'.
Identity of the perceiver and the perceived	One becomes unified with the whole, sees all things in oneself, or better, all things as oneself.

Source: Otto ((1932) 1987: 48–52).

prior to the many' (Otto (1932) 1987: 53). The One is the 'essence, being, existence' and 'unchangeable foundation' of the Many. It is the unconditioned that conditions all things. The One, the unifying foundation of the Many, can be treated impersonally or personally. For example, in theistic systems, it is called 'God' and addressed in personal terms. Finally, in the third stage, the Many are left behind, either absorbed into the One (Eckhart) or discarded as a veil that hides the One (Śaṅkara). The intuition of the transcendent One, or the 'Godhead' in theistic terminology, involves no multiplicity at all, not even the dependent multiplicity of the second stage. The three stages can be understood as a movement from the *complete immanence* of oneness in the Many, through the *immanence–transcendence* of the One, to the *complete transcendence* of the One. Otto, despite his lack of engagement with first-person accounts, makes a valuable contribution by distinguishing several kinds of unity, although the third-stage unity is not properly extrovertive if it is supposed that the world has been left behind. Strong on unity and conscious of altered temporality and luminosity, Otto was weak on features that Bucke had raised, such as affective characteristics and the specifics of the illuminative insight. Unrecognized by Otto, love was also neglected by Stace and Zaehner.

STACE: 'EXTROVERTIVE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE'

By examining a small number of writings from a variety of cultures and historical periods, Stace believed that he had not only extracted the essential characteristics common to all well-developed mystical experiences but had distinguished characteristics that differentiate two types of mystical experiences (Table 2.3). The *extrovertive* and the *introvertive* types share several characteristics (3 to 7), but the introvertive, unlike the extrovertive, is completely devoid of contents and therefore lacks spatio-temporal characteristics (1 and 2). Stace explains that extrovertive experience is well-developed nature mystical experience, experience that is more than a vague feeling of a presence in nature (1961: 80–1).

In making the introvertive–extrovertive distinction, Stace adapts from earlier scholars, including Otto, a twofold typology in which mystical experience of withdrawal 'inwards' to the self, mind, or soul is distinguished from mystical experience of movement 'outwards' to the diversified world. Stace's version of the inwards–outwards distinction and his characterizations of the two types have often been repeated, and they have provided a basis on which a number of

TABLE 2.3 Stace's characterization of mystical experience

	Extrovertive experience	Introvertive experience
1.	The unifying vision, expressed abstractly by the formula 'All is One.' The One is, in extrovertive mysticism, perceived through the physical senses, in or through the multiplicity of objects.	The Unitary Consciousness, from which all the multiplicity of sensuous or conceptual or other empirical content has been excluded, so that there remains only a void and empty unity.
2.	The more concrete apprehension of the One as being an inner subjectivity in all things, described variously as life, or consciousness, or a living Presence. The discovery that nothing is 'really' dead.	Being nonspatial and nontemporal.
3.	Sense of objectivity or reality.	Sense of objectivity or reality.
4.	Feeling of blessedness, joy, happiness, satisfaction, etc.	Feeling of blessedness, joy, happiness, satisfaction, etc.
5.	Feeling that what is apprehended is holy, or sacred, or divine.	Feeling that what is apprehended is holy, or sacred, or divine.
6.	Paradoxicality.	Paradoxicality.
7.	Alleged by mystics to be ineffable.	Alleged by mystics to be ineffable.

Source: Stace (1961: 79, 110–11, 131–2).

scholars have developed their work. Stace's characterization has even been used to define 'operational categories' for empirical research, in Pahnke's work on psychedelic and mystical experiences (e.g. Pahnke and Richards 1966), and in Hood's widely used 'Mysticism Scale' or 'M Scale' (1975),[4] which departs from Stace's summary lists by dropping paradoxicality, introducing noetic quality and ego loss, and allowing unity to be understood as a merger of self and world or the unification of everything in a whole. More recently, the Mysticism Scale has been reworked to allow extrovertive and introvertive experiences to be measured independently (Hood, Morris, and Watson 1993).

Stace's understanding of mystical unity will be discussed in Chapter 5. For the moment, it is sufficient to note that he takes the extrovertive unity to be either (1) paradoxical identity of objects perceived through the senses, or, more often, (2) the empty unity

[4] For detailed overviews, see Hood *et al.* (1996: 256–65) and Hood (1997).

of introvertive experience. In effect, Stace borrows and adapts two of the unities described by Otto, namely the first-stage identity between things that defies ordinary logic, and the second-stage One behind the Many. Unfortunately, Stace fails to discriminate sufficiently between the two, which leads to confusion. Also, Stace has no place for Otto's other first-stage unities: he dismisses the unity of the whole as trivial (1961: 64), and overlooks both perceiver–perceived unity and the ordering of things in the Eternal Now. Stace's assumption that the diversified contents of extrovertive experience are always *sensory* and his concept of *paradoxical identity* are developed from Otto, who prepared the ground by misinterpreting the Plotinian unity-in-multiplicity of the intelligible universe and the Eckhartian identity of things in the Godhead as a complete identity of sensory items.

Stace's second extrovertive characteristic, the realization that all things are alive, mirrors Bucke's observation, and it is the closest Stace comes to attributing noetic characteristics to mystical experience. Noetic characteristics—Bucke's 'Intellectual Illumination'—are almost absent from Stace's characterization, which is a major shortcoming because heightened knowledge, understanding, or meaning is commonly reported. The omission probably follows from Stace's overriding conviction that the mystical core is an empty unity, a pure consciousness devoid of any noetic contents. Noetic qualities are an embarrassment for Stace's theory. There are other notable omissions too, with no inclusion of luminosity or time-experience, as Wainwright has observed (1981: 10), and also no recognition of love. This is despite the occurrence of special luminosity and altered temporality in Stace's most detailed extrovertive case, a mescaline experience reported by N.M. Stace even discusses N.M.'s comment that 'Time and motion seemed to have disappeared so that there was a sense of the timeless and eternal' (1961: 73), yet the 'nontemporal' characteristic is included by Stace only in the *introvertive* list.

ZAEHNER: 'NATURAL MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE'

Zaehner does not bring together in any one place the characteristics he attributes to *natural mystical experience*, one of the three types of mystical experiences he distinguishes, the others being the *monistic* and *theistic* types. The summary in Table 2.4 imposes a degree of organization that is not typical of Zaehner's discursive style, and it is

TABLE 2.4 Zaehner's characterization of natural mystical experience

Feature	Comment
Sense of unity involving the natural world • unity between natural objects • unification in a greater life • unity through absorption in the world • unity through assimilation of the world	Peculiar to the natural mystical type
Transcendence of time and space	Shared with theistic and monistic types
Deepened sense of reality or significance	Shared with theistic and monistic types
Beauty	Shared with theistic and monistic types
Wonder and joy	Shared with theistic and monistic types
Lack of moral content	Shared with monistic type
No love or concern for others	Shared with monistic type

Sources: Zaehner (1957; 1958; 1960; 1970).

not intended to be definitive.[5] For Zaehner, mystical experience of any type is defined by *unity*, as it is for Stace. However, Zaehner understands unity not as a Stacian empty consciousness but primarily as unity with an object, either the world (natural), an impersonal Absolute (monistic), or a personal God (theistic). The key characteristic of natural mystical experience is a sense of union or identity with the natural world.[6] When fully developed, natural mystical unity is an identity, and the mystic proclaims 'I am the All'. Zaehner recognizes two basic categories of natural mystical unity (1957: 77). The first is a perceived unity *between* natural objects, although this

[5] See also Wainwright (1981: 12) and Newell (1981: 133–43, 258).

[6] Zaehner, playing with Jungian ideas, also distinguishes a second, more advanced type of 'natural' mysticism, which has unity with nature as just one part of its overall composition (1957: 118). This is an *integration* of the collective unconscious and the conscious mind in the Jungian Self. Whereas ordinary natural mystical experience is a unity with the collective unconscious, integration brings the unconscious into unity with the conscious in a way that is centred on the Self.

type of unity is not emphasized by Zaehner. Rather, the focus is on the mystic's sense of union or identity *with* the world or its parts. The object of the unity may range from individual objects to the entire universe.

In *Mysticism Sacred and Profane*, Zaehner sometimes speaks of the unity as an obliteration of the distinction between subject and object or an identity of subject and object (1957: 78, 101–2). More commonly, he favours the term 'expansion'. 'Enlargement' is also used: nature mystics 'would seem to agree that what they experienced was an enlargement of the ordinary field of consciousness in a vision that seemed to comprise all Nature' (1957: 99). Whilst continuing to use these expressions in his next work, *At Sundry Times*, Zaehner also refers to a unification in a greater life (1958: 48). Zaehner also considers two ways in which the mystic may experience union or identity with nature. In the first, the mystic feels 'swallowed up in the greater whole'; in the second the greater whole 'actually seems to be part of oneself' (1957: 40), the self or personality enlarged beyond its normal bounds.

Another characteristic attributed by Zaehner to natural mystical experience (and to mystical experience in general) is 'transcendence of time and space', which Stace had reserved for the introvertive experience. At one point, Zaehner gives transcendence of time a status comparable to that of unity, claiming that it is 'the lowest common denominator of every form of mysticism, and where there is no trace of it, there would seem to be no "mystical" experience' (1960: 7). Natural mystical experience 'is, at its highest, a transcending of time and space in which an infinite mode of existence is actually experienced' (1957: 50). It is by no means clear what Zaehner intends by 'transcending' or 'infinite mode of existence'. His treatment of the topic across his works is unsatisfactory, exhibiting obscurity, inconsistency, and a lack of helpful examples, and it is too convoluted to trace here.

Another characteristic—deepened sense of reality—is comparable to Stace's 'sense of objectivity or reality', shared by both the extrovertive and introvertive types. For Zaehner too, the characteristic is not peculiar to extrovertive experience. In comparison with mystical experience, ordinary experiences of the natural world may seem unreal, a shadow or shade (1957: 50, 199). Zaehner speaks from personal experience: 'beside it the ordinary world of sense experience seems pathetically unreal' (1957: xiii). Zaehner occasionally mentions several other characteristics, such as beauty, wonder, joy, bliss,

and luminosity. Again, these are not taken to be peculiar to natural mystical experience.

Finally—and of great importance for his evaluation of the mystical types—Zaehner believes that both natural and monistic mystical experiences *lack* significant features possessed by theistic mystical experience, namely moral qualities and love. Zaehner attests to these deficit characteristics in his own extrovertive experience. Theistic mystical experience takes God as its object in a union relationship, and it is inherently moral and good because the object is good (1957: 206). In contrast, natural mysticism, like monistic mysticism, is a 'mysticism without love' (1974*a*). Nature is indifferent, and a sense of unity with it can be no basis for morality and love (1957: 104, 204).

Complicating the Phenomenology

In lieu of a comprehensive treatment of extrovertive phenomenology, which would be a study in itself, I shall raise some commonly reported or striking features that I have noted in the existing body of accounts. I explored extrovertive phenomenology by gathering together over two hundred published accounts, from collections and individual sources, dating from the nineteenth century to the present day and mainly of Western cultural provenance. One limitation of the study is therefore its reliance on modern Western sources: cross-cultural and historical variations need to be investigated. Another limitation is the lack of attention to types and stages. I have not attempted to identify distinct types of extrovertive experience, except to suggest a distinction between experiences that bring a transformation of sense-mediated visual contents and experiences that derive their visual contents from some other source. Nor have I explored any patterns of development that the longer, more complex experiences may exhibit.

Accounts were selected for analysis if, on initial inspection, they were found to describe experiences in which the universe or some of its contents were experienced in a 'mystical' way, that is, transformed by profound unity, knowledge, love, luminosity, sense of reality, altered time-experience, and so forth, as set out in Chapter 1. I included experiences that took place under a variety of circumstances, as long as they satisfied the 'extrovertive' criterion, although I steered clear of the large number of drug-induced cases that

consisted mainly of perceptual distortions or trains of fantastic imagery. These are not typical of spontaneous extrovertive cases and could skew the characterization (see Chapter 3). In a study dedicated to extrovertive phenomenology, separate characterizations of experiences under different circumstances could be attempted. For example, extrovertive experiences triggered by nature scenery, near-death crises, and a range of psychoactive drugs could be compared and contrasted.

The accounts were all 'first-order'. Scholars have a variety of mystical texts at their disposal, and some are more useful than others for characterization purposes. Peter Moore has distinguished between (1) self-reports of mystical experiences ('first-order'), (2) impersonal accounts that need not be tied exclusively to the author's own experience ('second-order'), and (3) theological or liturgical writings that refer to spiritual realities but make little or no mention of mystical experience ('third-order') (1977: 118–29; 1978: 103). All three types have a place in the study of mysticism, but third-order writing is not helpful for characterization, being far removed from the experiences. First-order writings are the most suitable, and second-order writings may have value if they are not overly systematized. Of course, the study of first-order writings is not without its problems. Description can be selective, unclear, ambiguous, lacking in detail, and influenced by cultural expectations and received modes of expression. But it is to be hoped that a reliable picture emerges through study of a large number of accounts obtained from a variety of sources.

UNITY

The unity of extrovertive experiences is not distinct from other features. It is instantiated in transformed experiences of self, knowledge, love, vision, light, life, and time. Self is united with others; knower merges with known; love, light, and life weave things together; times and places fuse in a whole. Nevertheless, it is instructive to consider unity separately, before proceeding to the features through which it is encountered.

Various forms of unitive expression are to be found in extrovertive accounts, sometimes within the same account. One common form of expression describes the apprehension of all things together, in a complete, unbroken whole (*integral unity*):

What joy when I saw there was no break in the chain—not a link left out—everything in its place and time. Worlds, systems, all blended in one harmonious whole. (C.M.C., in Bucke (1901) 1989: 270)

In some cases, integral unity involves a 'filling in' of the gaps that ordinarily seem to keep things apart. Spaces connect rather than separate:[7]

it struck me that the oneness was in part explained by the sensation that the air and space and light was somehow tangible, one could almost grasp it, so that there wasn't a space which stopped because my human form was there, but that my form was merely a continuity of the apparently solid space. (RERC 322, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 46)

Integral unity corresponds to Bucke's 'conception of the whole' and Otto's experience of things 'together as an All'.

Further unities concern the relation between the world and the subject who apprehends it. Subjects often report that they felt themselves to be part of the world (*immersive unity*), became identified with the world or some of its parts (*identificatory unity*), or contained the world within themselves (*incorporative unity*). The following passage shows a progression through the four forms of expression:

I suddenly realized that I was conscious of everything that is [integral], and that I was part of it all [immersive]. Then I became aware of it from a different aspect. I was everything that is [identificatory]. It seemed curious at first, but then turned into a feeling of being very much alone. I thought surely there must be something or somebody outside of me, but I searched and searched and could find nothing that was not a part of me [incorporative]. (RERC 4764, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 171)

Identificatory language ('I was X', where X is the world, a tree, person, bird, rabbit, stone, and so on) tends to be ambiguous: it is often unclear what kind of unity subjects have experienced unless they give further indications.

Another form of unitive expression conveys a deep sense of fellowship with other beings, a sense of connection through common identity, empathy, and love (*communal unity*):

I experienced in that moment a sense of profoundest kinship with each and every person there. I loved them all!—but with a kind of love I had never felt before. It was an all-embracing emotion, which bound us together

[7] Other examples include RERC 2366 (Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 51), the cases of 'Harold' and Jenny Wade (Wade 2000: 285, 289–91), and 'Bengt' (Wade 2004: 172).

indissolubly in a deep unity of being. I lost all sense of personal identity then. (M.W., in Johnson 1959: 84–5)

In simple cases of identificatory and incorporative unity, appreciation of others may be obscured because everything has been absorbed into the greater consciousness or self. No other real subjects are discerned. Communal unity overcomes cosmic solipsism because it balances the incorporative 'they in me' with the reciprocal realization 'I in them'. Others are recognized as equals, as distinct beings who are also conscious of the whole. As a child of 5 or 6, Mary Austin experienced the 'Presence of God' as a commonality of life and awareness:

It was a summer morning, and the child I was had walked down through the orchard alone and come out on the brow of a sloping hill where there were grass and a wind blowing and one tall tree reaching into infinite immensities of blueness. Quite suddenly, after a moment of quietness there, earth and sky and tree and wind-blown grass and the child in the midst of them came alive together with a pulsing light of consciousness. There was a wild foxglove at the child's feet and a bee dozing about it, and to this day I can recall the swift inclusive awareness of each for the whole—I in them and they in me and all of us enclosed in a warm lucent bubble of livingness. (Austin 1931: 24–5)

Profound meditations on the communal unity of expanded vision are to be found in Thomas Traherne's writings. Amongst modern theorists, communal unity is most conspicuous in Edward Carpenter's treatment of cosmic consciousness and his socio-mystical concept of 'democracy'.

Subjects sometimes describe unifying links between things (*interconnective unity*). They report that objects were connected by visible or invisible bonds. In the gardens of St John's College, Oxford, the historian of science Frank Sherwood Taylor discovered the vitality, intelligibility, and interconnectedness of things:

At the same time everything revealed itself as interconnected. There was no visible link, yet round each centre of life there was an influence, as if each living thing were a centre in a spiritual medium. (Sherwood Taylor 1945: 98)

By contrast, the links discerned by F.W. were visible, consisting of a vibratory, radiating, sparkling light that surrounded objects and linked them together into a whole (Johnson 1959: 64–5). Perhaps the most extraordinary type of interconnection is the seemingly paradoxical identity of parts that some scholars, including Otto and

Stace, seized upon in traditional mystical literature (especially Plotinus' *Enneads*), but which is also suggested by a few modern accounts. Parts are intimately connected because each part is the whole (see Chapter 8). This form of interconnective unity can shade into communal unity if the whole parts are recognized as conscious beings.

Subjects occasionally report that they apprehended the world in unitive relation to its source or ground (*source unity*). The Many are united with the One that supports them, and they are united amongst themselves through their common origin. One of the most impressive descriptions of source unity comes from a 'rather well-known theologian' who was subjected to the 'Altered States of Consciousness Induction Device' (ASCID) developed by Jean Houston and Robert Masters, a pendulum-like device to which subjects were attached (see Wulff 1997: 195–6). The theologian felt as though his mind 'were united to the mind of God'. He witnessed luminous, mathematical Forms, the source of the Forms, and the entire world-process of outflow and return, with the creation 'participating in the infinite life of the Source' (Houston and Masters 1972: 312–14). Another experience of source unity has been described by John Wren-Lewis. After hours of unconsciousness brought on by a poisoned toffee supplied by a would-be robber, Wren-Lewis noticed that his shabby hospital room appeared extraordinarily beautiful, and he became aware of a 'shining darkness' at the 'back' of his consciousness, a darkness that 'seemed to contain everything that ever was or could be, all space and all time', but without any separation (1988: 110–12). In this new state of consciousness, which has persisted since 1983 with some ups and downs, Wren-Lewis and the rest of the world seem to emerge moment by moment from the darkness, bringing a feeling of unity (1988: 116).

Source unity corresponds to Otto's second-stage unifying vision. Stace's extrovertive unity bears some relation to it, but Stace greatly underplayed the role of the One as the source of phenomena. For the most part, he presented it as an undifferentiated consciousness juxtaposed with the sensory multiplicity, with no source–product relation. Strictly speaking, it is not an extrovertive unity because it is not experienced as connected with the natural world. The experience has a dual structure, consisting of an *empty unity* and a sensory multiplicity. Robert Forman has called this a 'dualistic mystical state' (Chapter 5).

Many of the unities are not theoretically exclusive and could occur together as aspects of the same experience. For instance, the subject could simultaneously apprehend the world as a whole (integral), feel a part of that whole (immersive), have a sense of loving fellowship with other beings (communal), intuit connections between things (interconnective), and discern the grounding of things in a common origin (source). Although immersion and incorporation are logical alternatives, immersive and incorporative expressions do occur together: 'I am a part of nature itself and it is a part of me—we are one' (RERC 2668, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 134). There is no contradiction if *different* kinds of self are involved, with the ordinary self felt to be immersed in the world and a deeper self or consciousness felt to incorporate the world.

Extrovertive unity is a unity that integrates rather than obliterates. It pulls together multiplicity without abolishing it. It is therefore intermediate between the relative fragmentation of ordinary experience, with its pervasive conceptualizations of radical division, and a condition of oneness or simplicity in which all distinctions are obliterated. At its most balanced, extrovertive unity would combine the differences that maintain diversity with the interconnections and identities that hold the many together. This *unity-in-difference* has two aspects. First, there is *unity-in-duality* of subject and object, knower and known, perceiver and perceived. Subject is united with object, but neither is obliterated. Second, there is *unity-in-multiplicity*. Many things exist together in the whole, each clear and distinct yet intimately united. Each is a part of the whole and embodies the whole through its connections with other parts and the whole.

SELF

Mystical accounts sometimes describe a 'letting go' of the everyday self. Indeed, it can be a diminution of the habitual self-focus that leads to a mystical experience (e.g. Ancilla 1955: 20). The transformation may be experienced as a relaxation or dissolution of the ordinary self and may also involve the discovery of a deeper self, such as Warner Allen's immortal self that is not the usual 'I' (1946: 31). Gopi Krishna felt himself expand into a 'titanic personality, conscious from within of an immediate and direct contact with an intensely conscious universe' (1971: 207). Mrs A. recounted her childhood discovery that 'Everything that had ever happened or would happen was within myself' (Johnson 1959: 71). Self-transformations are

closely associated with unity, knowledge, and love. Mystics who feel or know themselves to be immersed in the world, inclusive of the world, identified with things, or deeply in love with others, will experience changes in their customary self-identifications with body and personality. For instance, one subject experienced a slackening of his usual self-identity when he felt an empathetic oneness with seabirds struggling in a gale (C.E.N., in Hall 1937: 152).

In some instances, changes to the self-concept are a threat and inspire fear. Negative experiences seem to be particularly common in drug-induced cases, with the ordinary self smashed to pieces or inflated to a precarious state of cosmic importance (e.g. Braden 1967). The intensity and lack of control of some drug inductions appear to make subjects vulnerable to panicky interpretations and misidentifications. However, in many spontaneous cases the self-transformation is relatively smooth and positive, bringing liberating perspectives. For instance, an immersive unity allowed a man to appreciate that his recent losses were not so important (C. G. Price, in Coxhead 1985: 33). His self-worth was rooted in a permanent relation to the whole, rather than in passing personal concerns.

KNOWLEDGE

Accounts often refer to profound knowledge, insights, understanding, and meaning. Indeed, some experiences appear to be predominantly noetic, with no accompanying perceptual changes or feelings of love. Theorists have often neglected noetic qualities by focusing too intently on unity in the abstract, which is unfortunate because noetic qualities are often prominent and may indeed contribute to the unitive sense.

One type of noetic feature is *comprehensive knowledge*. During the experience, the subject feels that everything is known, although the comprehensive knowledge is not retained when the experience ends. Still, the subject believes that omniscience was attained. R. H. Ward knew 'everything there was to know' and found that this non-conceptual, non-discursive '*real knowledge* was simultaneous knowledge of the universe and all it contains' (1957: 28). The extent of the knowledge can be temporal as well as spatial. Gopi Krishna discovered 'a boundless world of knowledge, embracing the present, past, and future' (1971: 213).

Extrovertive experiences also bring *profound understanding and meaning*. Subjects acquire, if only for the duration of their experiences,

an understanding of purposes and reasons, the 'why' of existence, life, and suffering, and they may be struck by the simplicity of the revelation. Ancilla found that 'it was the answer to all questions' (1955: 21). Allen's discovery of the deeper self solved the puzzle: the simple answer to the 'riddle of life' was the realization that 'I am not "I", not the "I" I thought', and it was 'like coming home' (1946: 31). Others too have commented on the sense of returning home or rediscovering forgotten knowledge.[8]

As well as the comprehensive knowledge, extrovertive experience can bring *specific insights* that may be remembered afterwards. These include the kinds of insights that Bucke called 'intellectual illumination', such as realization of the unity, order, harmony, and life of the world, and the supreme importance of love. Subjects can make more specific observations too, about structures and processes, microscopic to cosmic, and about events, including events in their own lives. Mrs A. claimed to have seen, at the age of 8, 'many things, events I later learned about, also much I have as yet been unable to discover from any physical source' (Johnson 1959: 71). Another 8-year-old girl had insights into geological structure, including the importance of asymmetry in natural processes (RERC 2366, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 49–51). Specific insights can be answers to questions posed by subjects or relate to particular objects viewed by subjects. Bill Bingham remarked that his mystical knowledge was not of the all-inclusive kind and addressed whatever he focused his attention on (Corcoran 1996: 14, 131).[9]

Insights into a cosmic evolutionary process have been quite common and are sometimes combined with ideas of reincarnation. Martin Israel witnessed evolutionary development through cycles of rebirth in which creatures move towards 'completion' (1982: 30–1). One of the most commonly reported insights is the understanding that everything is or will be 'all right'. All is well when viewed in the global context, in the harmony of the perfected whole:

> Also I saw millions of jigsaw pieces all floating into their correct position. All was well. All was completed. As I know now that it is; but within our Earth concept of time and space, we still have the working through of it to accomplish. (RERC 4071, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 128)

[8] e.g. Ward (1957: 27), Raine (1975: 119–20), Gibson (Coxhead 1985: 62), Spangler (May 1993: 299).

[9] See also RERC (Beardsworth 1977: 16) and Franklin (2000). It can also be a feature of near-death experience (e.g. 'Tom Sawyer', in Ring 1984: 58).

> Everything and I were the same, all one. It was the most peaceful and 'right' feeling imaginable and I knew without any smallest doubt that everything happened for a reason, a good reason, and fitted into everything else, like an arch with all the bricks supporting each other and their cornerstone without cement, just by their being there. I was filled, swamped, with happiness and peace. Everything was RIGHT. (RERC 1239, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 47)

Subjects sometimes draw a connection between their 'all is well' realizations and Julian of Norwich's phrase 'all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well', popularized by T. S. Eliot in the *Four Quartets* (e.g. RERC 4548, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 154; RERC 1520, in Cohen and Phipps 1979: 142). In her *Showings*, Julian had accepted the orthodox theological position, indebted to Neoplatonism, that evil has no substantive existence when understood from God's omniscient, eternal viewpoint. From the divine perspective, all is well in the divinely created world, and sin is merely a local deprivation of good that works towards ultimate good. But it appears that Julian also entertained the unorthodox notion of a universal salvation that takes place at the end of time through a divine act (Baker 1994: 63–82), so that 'all shall be well' refers to an event in the future as well as to the eternal state of affairs. Interestingly, Bucke's characterization of cosmic consciousness includes realizations of both the lack of sin in the world and the eventual happiness of all. Bucke had been drawn to Universalist teachings in his earlier years, an attraction that possibly influenced his understanding of cosmic consciousness (see Shortt 1986: 64–6). Universalists believe in the ultimate salvation of all.

LOVE

Subjects can experience powerful feelings of love for others in the vicinity or in the world in general. Margaret Prescott Montague was 'madly in love' with everything she saw:

> For those fleeting, lovely moments I did indeed, and in truth, love my neighbor as myself. Nay, more: of myself I was hardly conscious, while with my neighbor in every form, from wind-tossed branches and little sparrows flying, up to human beings, I was madly in love. (1916: 593)

Subjects sometimes feel deeply loved themselves and gain the impression that reality is loving and caring. In Chapter 3, we shall

also see that love, concern, and compassion are sometimes the antecedent circumstances of extrovertive experience.

Based on inadequate data, the classic characterizations of extrovertive experience neglected love. In the most glaring instance, Zaehner mistakenly took the lack of love in his own experience as typical of extrovertive experience. Love can indeed be absent, and it is noteworthy that whilst some experiences stop at unity, knowledge, and vision, others begin with love or proceed to love. Two accounts of mescaline experimentation illustrate the difference. William Braden experienced a shattering of his ordinary sense of self, saw interconnections between the constituents of objects, and then remembered his identity with all things (1967: 229–43). The last realization was profoundly disturbing for several reasons, the most unsettling aspect being the loss of others. In the identificatory unity, Braden gained the world but lost other people. He desperately wanted there to be at least one other real person, but none was forthcoming. Rosalind Heywood's mescaline experiment proceeded similarly, with self-loss, interconnectedness, and oneness (1978: 229–39). However, there were differences, and the most significant concerned love. Heywood had asked where love was in the unbearable cosmic splendour and interconnectedness, a question that shifted her perspective to that of the 'Divine Mother', an attitude of unpossessive, joyous, personal love towards the world and everything in it.

VISION

Extrovertive visual experience can take several forms. In the simplest cases, visual experience continues as normal, with no luminous transfiguration and no expanded range (e.g. S.T., in Johnson 1959: 42; Austin 1998: 537). In another variation, vision of the surroundings is completely obliterated by light, but the subject is inwardly in touch with the world through unity and knowledge, and the experience therefore qualifies as extrovertive:[10]

I then looked up at the snows—but immediately I lost all normal consciousness and became engulfed as it were in a great cloud of light and an ecstasy of Knowing and understanding all the secrets of the Universe, and a sense of the utmost bliss in the absolute certainty of the perfection and piercing purity of goodness in the Being in whom it seemed, all were finally

[10] See also Spinney (Zaehner 1958: 50–1), Bharati (1976: 39), Owens (Coxhead 1985: 35), and Smith (Smith and Tart 1998: 100).

enclosed, and yet in that enclosure utterly liberated. I 'saw' nothing in the physical sense . . . it was as if I were blinded by an internal light, and yet I was 'looking outward'. (RERC 514, in Beardsworth 1977: 32)

In some cases, the obscuring light dissipates and leaves behind a transformed perception of the world. A.G.F.'s core experience took place in a 'great whiteness' that blotted out her vision, even though her eyes were open. When the light faded, she was left with enhanced perceptions that lasted for months: 'The world was turned into a veritable paradise' (Hall 1937: 250–1).

More often, the luminosity is diffuse or clear, rather than totally obscuring. In Bucke's case, the light was a haze, a 'flame colored cloud' that he initially interpreted as a nearby fire and then as an interior light ((1901) 1989: 8). One subject experienced a hazy luminosity on a cliff walk:

Although there was no mist, the light seemed suddenly white and diffused and I experienced the most incredible sense of oneness and at the same time 'knew what it was all about', 'it' being existence. (RERC 322, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 46)

Individual objects can appear to glow from within, or there can be a general increase in brightness in the visual field. Illumination can appear uniform, with no central source and no shadows. Sparkling luminosity, exhibiting point-like concentrations, is also described: a prayer for help led to a vision of trees, houses, and stones filled with sparkling light (F.W., in Johnson 1959: 64–5). Like Bucke, subjects may conclude that the light is 'interior', or like Franklin, they may describe the light as both interior and exterior.[11] Others simply regard the light as an external phenomenon, a suffusion of the surroundings. As for colour, white and gold are often reported. Bucke's flame or rose-coloured cloud is not without parallel, as there are some reports of red and blue colorations, including pinks, oranges, purples, and violets. Green seems to be uncommon, although Laski notes an anaesthetic case in which 'the meaning of everything' was a 'sort of green light' (1961: 261).

Visual transformations can include increased attentiveness and clarity. Intense awareness is sometimes reported in the early stages of the experiences. For instance, one subject experienced a sharpened sense of awareness attended by appreciation of beauty and an intense joy, and, as the experience deepened, a sense of her

[11] For other examples, see Beardsworth (1977: 22–3).

environment as part of a greater whole ('Judith', in Hoffman 1992: 40). Objects stand out more clearly than before, in distinctness, shape, and colour. Vision can even become penetrative or 'X-ray'-like, reaching into and through normally opaque objects. In extreme cases, the entire universe becomes transparent. Not all experiences of the cosmos are visual: apprehension of the universe can be unitive and noetic. Nevertheless, there are visions of the cosmos, and these obviously raise questions about the nature of the experiences and the nature of perception. As noted previously, some leading scholars have taken the sense-mediated status of extrovertive visual contents for granted,[12] and it is true that many accounts do describe what seem to be transformed sensory contents. If a representative or indirect theory of perception is assumed, then it is the subject's visual *representations* that have been transfigured by luminosity, not vision of the objects themselves in the external world. However, the penetrative and cosmic visions seem to reach beyond the usual sensory limits, and some visual experiences occur when sensory input is greatly diminished, as in sleep and near-death emergencies. Warner Allen's experience took place after he had closed his eyes. C.M.C.'s cosmic vision seems to have occurred after sensory perception had been excluded. Yogananda discovered that his panoramic vision was the same whether his eyes were open or closed (1993: 242–3). It is difficult to understand how these could be sense-mediated if standard theories of perception are assumed. Sensory mechanisms, as ordinarily understood, would be unable to support penetrative vision or mediate a vision of the cosmic immensity. The experiences would have to be hallucinatory or dream-like, or involve trans-sensory contact with the universe. Alternatively, a non-standard theory of sensory perception could be invoked, such as Henri Bergson's direct-realist filtration theory of perception, which in principle allows expanded sensory contact with the world (see Chapter 8).

It is interesting that some accounts suggest that two modes of visual perception can operate simultaneously, ordinary sensory perception and mystical non-sensory perception. Although open to interpretation, Gopi Krishna's account seems to describe two types of vision, one sensory, phenomenal, and transient, the other trans-

[12] 'the senses provide the raw material' (Otto (1932) 1987: 255); 'perceived through the physical senses' (Stace 1961: 79); 'To put the matter crudely, the panenhenic vision . . . occurs with the eyes open' (Smart 1968: 66); 'the "raw data" are presumably fairly ordinary visual, auditory, tactual and (sometimes) olfactory sense data, although these may be unusually intense and vivid' (Wainwright 1981: 23).

sensory, noetic, and eternal. Gopi Krishna had become 'conscious from within' of an 'intensely conscious universe', whereas the phenomenal world about him appeared phantom-like, an 'evanescent and illusive appendage' of the ocean of existence (1971: 207–8). Irina Starr found that she continued to observe objects in the ordinary way, but at the same time she was able to direct a special faculty of inner vision towards objects. It was in this special sight that objects were transformed by light, life, beauty, and meaning (1991: 8–9). Again, we need to ask whether the special vision described in such accounts is hallucinatory or a trans-sensory form of contact with the world.

SOUND

Auditory transformations are reported far less often than visual ones. The general increase in attentiveness at the commencement of experiences can include a sharpening of hearing as well as sight. However, whereas vision continues to deepen, hearing can diminish. There are several reports of a silence or 'hush'. For instance, Derek Gibson was travelling to work by motorcycle when the engine noise faded, without any sign of mechanical failure. When the subsequent extrovertive experience came to an end, the engine noise returned (Coxhead 1985: 10–11). Similar in this respect—and in other respects too—was Yogananda's experience. A quietening of traffic noise was associated with visual extension into the immediate environment, and also a feeling of bliss and a permeating luminescence (1993: 95).

Paradoxically, subjects may relate that the silence was accompanied by heightened perceptions that included hearing. In these cases, 'silence' may refer to the inner state of mind, rather than to the auditory sense:

> The first symptom was a sudden hush that seemed to envelop me—this was subjective, however, as my hearing and all my other senses appeared actually to be keener than normal. (RERC 904, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 133)

When Major Haswell scrambled out of a trench in the Second World War, he could see the flames of exploding shells, but could not hear them in the stillness that marked the beginning of his experience. Yet he was surprised to hear the singing of birds, even though there were no birds nearby (Coxhead 1985: 39). After hearing a

commanding voice, a woman was surrounded by a 'tremendous silence', but she could hear the insects in the grass (RERC 4233, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 126). Both subjects experienced unitive identification with insects, Haswell with a butterfly, the woman with bees, beetles, and ants (and many other things too).

Some cases suggest that there is a link between the silence and a transformed experience of time. A woman reported that both sound and motion 'stopped' (RERC 4415, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 53). A man felt that time had 'frozen' along with a 'cessation of all sound' (RERC 3401, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 135). The universe was quivering, but the motion was frozen. On an earlier occasion, beautiful music seemed to pervade the surroundings, and the sense of time disappeared.

TIME

Extrovertive experiences are usually fairly brief, lasting from moments to hours, although traces may remain for days, weeks, and longer. In rare cases, the experiences themselves have endured for days and weeks (e.g. Courtois 1986; Starr 1991; Segal 1998: 12–13), and perhaps indefinitely (e.g. Wren-Lewis 1988). Subjects often lose track of time and cannot gauge how long their experiences lasted unless they have some reference points before and after. Experiences often start abruptly, but gradual shifts are also described. The experiences usually fade away naturally, although subjects sometimes report a sudden ending brought about by an intrusive sound or social interaction (e.g. RERC 904, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 133; Mrs L., in Johnson 1959: 23–4).

Although momentary, some experiences seem to endure for a long time or have a 'timeless' or 'eternal' character. Sometimes transformation and motion cease completely, or, expressed more abstractly, 'time stops'. Alternatively, transformation persists but alters in quality: things change in a coordinated manner, integrated in the harmoniously transforming whole. It is a dynamic aspect of unity: the world is experienced not only as an integral, interconnected whole but as a whole that *develops* in an integrated way. Subjects may use musical analogies to convey the sense of coordinated transformation. The transforming world is a cosmic dance.

Subjects may report that the temporal scope of their experiences expanded: a succession of events was taken in 'all-at-once'. In extreme form, inclusivity consists of an apprehension of the entire

world-process, past, present, and future. Inclusive apprehension has sometimes been ascribed to God, the vision of the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, and mystics who achieve contact or union with God may be thought to share in the vision. Thomas Traherne gives eloquent expression to the idea when he describes the space in which all ages are exhibited to saints and mystics (*Centuries* v. 6). Traherne joins inclusivity with momentariness: each moment of time, if inspected closely, would reveal the eternal spaciousness. Reference to eternal duration is not confined to older, theologically infused mystical writings, for it recurs in modern first-order accounts (e.g. RERC 2505, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 108; Wendy Rose-Neill, in Coxhead 1985: 30). The eternity is not a stagnant changelessness but the dynamic world-process presented in its entirety. Thus, C.M.C. saw 'everything in its time and place', but her description stresses life and development, the 'passing from order to order' of the everlasting, universal life (Bucke (1901) 1989: 270). Temporal inclusivity and harmonious flow are not mutually exclusive, for the eternal vision presents the dynamic, coordinated transformation of things in comprehensive, completed form.

LIFE

The dynamic character of the world is often expressed as 'livingness'. Even inanimate things are found to be intensely alive. Everything seems to pulsate, vibrate, 'breathe':

> All of a sudden, when I was walking in the country near my home (not taking a walk, just going to the mail-box) everything came alive around me, and seemed to glow and *breathe* with animation—even the sticks and stones at my feet, and the mountain across the valley; the trees particularly I remember. It was a very beautiful and profoundly disturbing and frightening experience. (RERC 271, in Beardsworth 1977: 62)

The sense of animation can derive from the dynamism of the scene, the vibration, motion, or shifting luminosity. Life means transformation. The chemist Humphry Davy (1778–1829), a friend of Coleridge and Southey, brought out the life–motion association very strongly in his account of a nature experience:

> To-day, for the first time in my life, I have had a distinct sympathy with nature. I was lying on the top of a rock to leeward; the wind was high, and everything in motion; the branches of an oak tree were waving and murmuring to the breeze; yellow clouds, deepened by grey at the base, were rapidly

floating over the western hills; the whole sky was in motion; the yellow stream below was agitated by the breeze; everything was alive, and myself part of the series of visible impressions; I should have felt pain in tearing a leaf from one of the trees.... Deeply and intimately connected are all our ideas of motion and life, and this, probably, from very early association. How different is the idea of life in a physiologist and a poet! (Davy 1836: i. 119)

The sense of animation can also be a realization that everything is conscious or intelligent, or that everything has its existence in consciousness or mind (e.g. Austin 1931; Starr 1991). Life means consciousness.

PRESENCES AND REALITIES

Personal or impersonal 'presences' are sometimes reported in extrovertive accounts. Subjects may gain the impression that a personal being is in the vicinity, even though no one can be seen. Genevieve Foster saw nothing unusual with her 'outward eye', but she knew that a 'numinous figure' stood in front of her, a figure with whom she was exchanging love (1985: 43). R. Ogilvie Crombie, a theosophist who became involved in the Findhorn Community, felt a surge of power and an intensification of awareness as he walked through the grounds of a mansion, and then became aware of a presence by his side, whom he understood to be Pan. Crombie became 'one' with the god and saw the natural world through his eyes, spying nymphs, fairies, and other nature beings in the woods (Sutcliffe 1998: 36–7). More often, the personal presence is an all-pervading love or benevolence, with no localized form, and subjects may talk of the 'presence of God'. When used impersonally, 'presence' can refer to a life-force or power, or to the reality that the subject is beginning to apprehend. John Middleton Murry's sense of 'presence' had two aspects, the presence of the universe in which he found himself to be a part, and the presence of his deceased wife Katherine Mansfield, who was also knit into the whole (Murry 1929: 36–8).

Subjects frequently believe that they were in touch with reality during their extrovertive mystical experiences, whether the world in its hidden depths, the source from which the world emerges, or a power that is active in the world. During a sleepless night shortly after the death of her mother, a woman had the 'most shattering experience of her life':

Without any sense perception (except that I do seem to recollect an impression of light and darkness), I was made aware of a Reality beyond anything that my own mind could have conceived. And that Reality was a total love of all things in heaven and earth. 'It' enclosed and accepted every thing and every creature: there was no distinction of its love between the star, the saint and the torturer. All were 'kept' by this Power, and loved by it. I understood—then at least—the phrases 'I am that I am' and what I later read as 'the coincidence of opposites'. 'It' is Eternal Being. . . .

For myself I did not doubt then, and have never doubted since, that I was put in touch with that ultimate reality for which we use the shorthand 'God'. (RERC 4182, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 61–2)

Standing amongst pine trees and looking at the sky, another woman was suddenly lifted into white luminosity and ecstasy, with 'no sense of time or place'. After a minute or two, the condition subsided, leaving a feeling of unity and a conviction that reality had been touched: 'I felt ONE with everything and everybody; and somehow I *knew* that what I had experienced was Reality, and that Reality is Perfection' (B.E.B., in Hall 1937: 81).

For subjects in theistic religious contexts, 'God' is the obvious point of reference for expressing the sense of contact with reality. To give a possible historical example, Angela of Foligno recalled that once, during Mass, she conversed with God and was then shown the whole of creation: '. . . in everything that I saw, I could perceive nothing except the presence of the power of God, and in a manner totally indescribable.' Overcome with wonder, her soul cried out: 'This world is pregnant with God!' (Lachance 1993: 169–70). Contemporary subjects have also understood their experiences in terms of contact with God or some related spiritual reality. For example, one woman understood her experience of luminosity and oneness with her surroundings in terms of the Holy Trinity (RERC 4230, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 73–4). The woman whose 'dentist's chair' account was quoted at the beginning of the Introduction went on to say:

I was aware of a hand holding the whole world in its care—regardless of race, colour or creed—this was God caring for all his children. . . . I have never doubted since that day that there is a God and that he is a God of love. (RERC 4384, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 114)

When an extrovertive account refers to the spiritual reality as God or the presence of God, it is often unclear how the subject was able to recognize it as such. In St Angela's story, it is taken for granted that

the presence is God's power: she has been conversing with God, who then proceeds to demonstrate his presence in the world ('I want to show you something of my power'). Do subjects know intuitively that the presence is God, through some higher, spiritual knowledge, such as God's self-knowledge, or is God recognized through the divine characteristics and activities? In the following example, the subject explains that he has used 'God' language because it suggests some of the features he experienced:

> I have used the word 'God' because I know of no other word which carries the implication of infinite power, goodness, wisdom and peace. But whatever name we give to this power, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that it exists and that it is available to anyone who is prepared to expend some effort to make contact. (RERC 874, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 152)

The account exhibits a cautiousness over 'God' terminology that is often present in modern testimonies. Subjects sometimes explain that they only thought of God afterwards, or that they are unsure whether God terminology is appropriate, or that by 'God' they mean an interior reality rather than the external, anthropomorphic deity that conventional religion had taught them.[13] In one case of cosmic mystical experience, induced by LSD, the subject observed that there was no directing force: 'Everything flowed from itself by its own energy. If there is any god or creative power, it exists only as a man-made concept' ('successful executive', in Houston and Masters 1972: 307). The subject had apparently encountered the depths of cosmic reality but was reluctant to call it 'God' because there was no sense of a dominant or controlling force.

BODY

Changes in body awareness and unusual body sensations are sometimes reported. Consciousness expansion and incorporative unity can be expressed as expansion of the head or the body. Some notable scriptural and literary portrayals of the cosmic body may have been inspired by extrovertive experiences. Arjuna's experience of Kṛṣṇa's cosmic display in the *Bhagavad Gītā* combines 'body of God'

[13] e.g. account from Starbuck's collection in James ((1902) 1985: 394 n. 2), Austin (1931: 25), E.G.S. (Hall 1937: 41), Ancilla (1955: 21), Stapledon (Johnson 1959: 44), 'person I have not met' (Johnson 1984: 111–12), Gibson (Coxhead 1985: 63), RERC 4182 (Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 61–2), RERC 4217 (Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 128–9), and Franklin (2000: 14).

theology with a mystical theophany.[14] Some mystics have taken the idea further:

> May my body blossom into your true nature,
> The worlds become my limbs.
> Utpaladeva, *Śivastotrāvalī* 8. 7 (Bailly 1987: 57)

> You never Enjoy the World aright, till the Sea it self floweth in your Veins, till you are Clothed with the Heavens, and Crowned with the Stars . . .
> Thomas Traherne, *Centuries* I. 29 (1958: 15)

The mystic not only witnesses the cosmic body of God but shares it through union with God. Edward Carpenter also wrote about the mystic's cosmic body (e.g. 1904*a*: 220–2).

Perhaps the most interesting somatic phenomena are the sensations of flowing 'energy' and feelings in specific body areas:

> Suddenly, it was as if a funnel was in the top of my head and my consciousness went out into it, spreading wider and wider as it went. (RERC 4764, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 171)

Muz Murray's account of cosmic expansion is rich in somatic references. His experience began with a feeling of 'strange pressure' in the 'brain', which developed into an understanding of his identity with the universe and the sense that his body cells had a consciousness of their own (Coxhead 1985: 31–3). Anne Bancroft's feeling of unity with a rhododendron branch seemed to come from her forehead (1977: 66–7). Sarah Miles experienced intense heat above the solar plexus, coldness in her limbs, and a strange form of breathing that led into a state of unity with all things (Lello 1985: 75). Allan L. Smith's experience of 'cosmic consciousness' began with 'some mild tingling in the perineal area' (Smith and Tart 1998: 100). After A.G.F. was surrounded by white light, she noticed a 'vitality' flow from her feet to the crown of her head, at which point she felt the barrier between herself and God come down (Hall 1937: 249–50).

It has already been noted that some Indian systems of contemplative practice tie expansive experiences of the cosmos to transformations in the subtle anatomical structures said to be positioned approximately along the spinal column, from the perineum to the crown of the head and above. Study of the literature on modern *kuṇḍalinī* experiences may reveal additional extrovertive cases with

[14] On the cosmic body of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa, see Matchett (2001). Also Overzee (1992), on the divine body in Rāmānuja's thought. The Buddhist 'three-body doctrine' is also of interest (e.g. Harvey 1990: 125–8).

somatic accompaniments, although there appear to be many instances of *kuṇḍalinī* arousal in which extrovertive experience does not ensue (Sannella 1976: 25–42). This is to be expected, for visionary and unitive expansions are supposed to occur only when the uppermost *cakras* are activated, preceded or accompanied by the development of paranormal abilities.

PARANORMAL PHENOMENA

Some scholars, including Otto, Stace, and Inge, have drawn a sharp distinction between paranormal phenomena and mystical experiences, dismissing the former as inferior occurrences that can safely be put aside in the study of mysticism. Others have rightly criticized the sharp separation, pointing out that the boundaries between the two are not clear-cut and that historical instances show a relation. Mystics have described paranormal abilities, and paranormal phenomena have accompanied their meditative practices (see Moore 1977: 59–62; Hollenback 1996: 17–20, 276–8). In the case of extrovertive experience, a connection with telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and out-of-the-body experience is sometimes evident. For instance, Derek Gibson experienced a dramatic extension of vision that began to penetrate objects and magnify them (Coxhead 1985: 10). The penetrative vision could be classed as 'paranormal', specifically a vivid form of 'X-ray clairvoyance', vision that supposedly reaches through opaque barriers. In Gibson's case, the 'X-ray ability' (as he called it) developed *unitive* features, taking the experience in a mystical direction. Gibson was no longer a detached, clairvoyant observer but became unified with the things he saw. The experience became recognizably mystical, with strong noetic and unitive features, transformation of self-experience, peace, and joy. It is noteworthy that the mystical state emerged out of the paranormal vision, suggesting a connection between the two. Gibson's experience is unusual but not unique. Peter Moore (1977: 70–4), for instance, illustrates the overlap between mystical and paranormal by quoting the intriguing case published by W. L. Wilmshurst (1928).[15] The experience began with a penetrative, panoramic vision

[15] Rather oddly, Wilmshurst claims to have received permission to 'restate' the narrative ('The Vision Splendid') in his own words, which suggests that the experience was not his own. 'Restating' the narrative is not the best procedure for conveying a reliable account, unless Wilmshurst was himself the subject. An abridged version is included in Happold's study (1970: 136–8).

associated with a blue or violet haze. As the experience developed in a mystical direction, the hue changed to gold. In another case, Julie Chimes recalls an experience that occurred when she was subjected to a murderous assault (1996: 65–6, 69–71). The experience combined out-of-the-body experience, a life-review, telepathy, clairvoyance, and mystical features (unity, meaning, love): 'Somehow everything was me. In me and out of me. . . . I was part of a magnificent whole' (1996: 70). There was a *kuṇḍalinī*-like sensation of heat moving up the spine, and even the desolidifying blue light of the Wilmshurst account made an appearance, associated with a vision of Christ.

The link between paranormal and mystical phenomena should be of considerable interest to theorists. Is it indicative of common or related mechanisms, as the *kuṇḍalinī* framework would have us believe? If paranormal phenomena sometimes develop into mystical states, is it a sign that the former are prefigurations of the latter, with, say, telepathy and clairvoyance embryonic forms of mystical knowledge and vision, and precognition, retrocognition, and life-reviews rooted in the temporal inclusivity of extrovertive mystical experience? An explanation that demonstrates subsumptive power by accounting for both extrovertive and paranormal phenomena would be in a stronger position than one that dealt with just one or the other.

FUSION OF CHARACTERISTICS

Lists of individual characteristics may give the impression that the characteristics are discrete. However, some accounts suggest a fusion. For instance, light–life–love and light–life–knowing fusions are described by C.M.C. (Bucke (1901) 1989: 271) and Irina Starr (1991: 10) respectively. In another case, there was a light–consciousness–love link: on a nature walk, H.B.'s consciousness expanded in unison with a golden light, and there was an awareness that 'in this light, or one with it' is a spirit of 'smiling, loving watchfulness and beauty' (Hall 1926: 86–7).

Colours, sounds, and other sensory qualities may also lose their separateness, a merging of sensuous contents that can be called 'synaesthetic'. Synaesthesia is not commonly reported in the accounts I have read, with the exception of drug-induced cases, which is perhaps no surprise since it is well known that psychedelic experiences often involve synaesthesia (see Marks 1978: 99–100).

However, at least two examples of light–sound synaesthesia do appear to be non-drug cases. Both subjects felt that they had come into contact with reality, which gives the experiences their mystical feel (RERC 3144, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 175–6; M.I.D., in Johnson 1959: 60–1). In a third case, both mystical and synaesthetic unities were described, and all sensory qualities seemed to be rooted in luminosity ('Helga', in Hoffman 1992: 39).

From the early 1880s, synaesthesia received medical, psychological, aesthetic, and mystical attention. For some thinkers, it represented an advanced stage of evolutionary development that brought visionary revelation and unity, whilst for others it was, like mystical experience, a symptom of degeneration (see Dann 1998). Bucke, who shared the contemporary interest in the evolution and devolution of the mind, drew no connection between cosmic consciousness and synaesthesia, although Carpenter, in a letter to Bucke dated 16 June 1892, had attempted to convey his mystical experience by juxtaposing synaesthetic and identificatory unities: 'The perception seems to be one in which all the senses unite into one sense. In which *you become* the object' (Bucke (1901) 1989: 198; see Weir 1995: 49). Elsewhere, Carpenter described cosmic consciousness as 'a sense that one *is* those objects and things and persons that one perceives (and the whole universe)—a sense in which sight and touch and hearing are all fused in identity' (Bucke (1901) 1989: 206). Carpenter's assimilation of synaesthesia to mystical unity may well express his own experience or simply reflect contemporary spiritualizations of synaesthesia. One source, however, is clear: Carpenter had become familiar with Śaiva teachings on the reunification of the sense faculties in a higher space consciousness (1892: 187–91).

POSITIVE/NEGATIVE TONE

Experiences of a 'spiritual' character can be far from uplifting. Merete Jakobsen (1999) has drawn attention to a variety of disturbing religious experiences recorded in the Alister Hardy collection, and in recent years researchers of near-death experience have become increasingly aware of negative cases (e.g. Greyson and Bush 1992). Drug-induced spiritual experiences can be uplifting, but 'bad trips' are common. By contrast, spontaneous extrovertive experiences seem to be generally positive in tone, dominated by bliss, joy, reassuring insights, balancing perspectives, love, and so forth, if the

cases I have studied are representative. It is, of course, quite possible that they are not fully representative, for negative experiences are less likely to be reported than positive ones, except in psychiatric contexts. Still, it is difficult to point to spontaneous examples that are thoroughly negative, with no redeeming features at all, although extrovertive experiences associated with drugs, mental breakdown, or *kuṇḍalinī* arousals can be very disturbing indeed (e.g. Braden 1967; 'Adelaide M. B.', in Schroeder 1922; Gopi Krishna 1971).

This is not to say that spontaneous extrovertive experiences are free from disturbing elements, but the overall character is generally affirmative, rather than horrific or destructive. Nevertheless, the sheer intensity of positive features, such as beauty, love, and understanding, can be overwhelming. Changes in the sense of self can also be very unsettling. The challenge to the ordinary self-concept can generate fear, and identificatory and incorporative unities can bring feelings of loneliness and existential anxiety. These feelings may interfere with the further development of the experiences and leave subjects in a raw state. John Horgan's experience (1998: 261–2; 2003: 32–5) under a psychedelic drug is strikingly similar in some ways to William Braden's experience under mescaline. Both Horgan and Braden describe the existential fear of the solipsistic, all-inclusive ego that seeks refuge from its anxiety and loneliness in a multiplicity of limited selves, and both are drawn by their experiences into theological speculations about a fearful or limited God. However, Horgan also speculates that in the grandiose state he may have projected his personal fears of self-dissolution on God (2003: 70).

If identificatory and incorporative unities can, on occasions, lead to an inflationary misappropriation of the world by the human ego and consequent difficulties, there is the converse possibility that immersive unity can prompt a deflationary swing in which the ego overreacts to the discovery of its insignificance in the overall pattern of the world. There is also the possibility of self-criticism if the experience discloses 'moral' failings (e.g. St Teresa's shame). Subjects may feel that their negative attitudes to others and selfish priorities have put them out of step with the deeper nature of things. This reaction seems to arise quite often in near-death circumstances.

3
Sex, Drugs, and Beethoven?
Circumstances and Consequences

To gain an impression of extrovertive mystical experience, it is not enough to catalogue its experiential features. It is also important to look at the situations in which the experiences arise. Intriguingly, extrovertive experiences occur under a wide variety of circumstances. Some, such as beautiful nature settings and psychological distress, are very common; others, such as childbirth and sleep, seem to be far less common but are still of interest. It is important to attend to circumstances because an adequate theory of extrovertive experience should be able to explain how very different conditions facilitate very similar experiences. Is there a common factor that links the various circumstances? Many circumstances seem to be facilitative because they reduce mental chatter and self-preoccupation; others, such as drugs and organic conditions, seem to work through their direct impact on brain functioning.

The consequences of extrovertive experiences are also of interest, for those who have the experiences and for those who theorize about them. The experiences sometimes appear to serve a function or occur for a purpose. The experiences can act as healing interventions, taking place during periods of psychological distress and bringing relief in the short term and greater stability and happiness in the long term. They can also be conversion events, exerting a profound influence on the intellectual and spiritual outlooks of subjects. Like other spiritual experiences, extrovertive mystical experiences can also bring difficulties, and if I have overemphasized these challenging aspects, it is because they are more likely to be overlooked.

Predisposing Circumstances

Circumstances are usefully divided into two kinds. *Predisposing* circumstances are factors of a general or deep-rooted nature that are thought to make a person more likely to have an experience.

They can include sex, age group, ethnicity, personality, education, social group, and religious background.[1] Sex and class differences are of interest to theorists who look at mystical experience as a psychological or social phenomenon. For example, survey studies have usually found that women are more likely than men to report religious and mystical experiences (Hay and Morisy 1978: 262–3). Theorists can take this to mean that women are more likely to have the experiences, tracing the difference to, for example, gender differences in mother–infant bonding (e.g. Sjørup 1997) or cognitive style (e.g. Mercer and Durham 1999).

Without careful demographic investigation, employing statistically representative samples, it would be unwise to make claims about the predisposing circumstances of extrovertive experience. Some early attempts illustrate the pitfalls. Bucke's pioneering efforts at the end of the nineteenth century were handicapped by a male-dominated sample gathered from acquaintances and historical figures, a sample that was additionally flawed because it only sporadically illustrated his topic, 'cosmic consciousness', the psychological faculty that intuits 'the life and order of the cosmos'. Bucke associated cosmic consciousness almost exclusively with male subjects aged thirty to forty, 'men of good intellect, of high moral qualities, of superior physique' ((1901) 1989: 55), a predisposition that Bucke took to support his evolutionary theory of cosmic consciousness.[2] Applying Ernst Haeckel's dictum that 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny', Bucke maintained that the new faculty emerges in the most advanced specimens of humanity, who, having fully traversed the developmental stages of the species in their individual development, are poised to take the next, emergent step into greater consciousness (see Shortt 1986: 98–100). For Bucke, these advanced specimens were superior men who had reached the height of their powers in mid-life. Inspired by Bucke's work, W. Winslow Hall pursued a 'Natural History of Illumination' by assembling and analysing a more coherent group of testimonies. Hall was interested in experiences of 'overwhelming feeling of oneness with The Whole' (1926: 9)

[1] See, for instance, Greeley (1975: 57–63), Hay and Morisy (1978), Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997: 90–3), Argyle (2000: 67–70), and Wulff (2000: 407–10).

[2] Bucke's views on predisposing circumstances include observations on the parents ('the man should have a great mother') and the importance of perfect conditions at the moment of biological conception ((1901) 1989: 312–14). Ideally, the parents should have opposite temperaments, and the perfect conditions at conception ensure that the temperaments are equally represented in the offspring, giving a rounded person.

or 'oneness with all things in God' (1937: 8), and many of the accounts he brought together in *Observed Illuminates* (1926) and *Recorded Illuminates* (1937) do indeed describe extrovertive experiences. Although the books are a valuable documentary resource for study of early twentieth-century cases, the samples were not sufficiently representative to justify Hall's demographic observations, which again had the male sex as a predisposing circumstance (1937: 268–73).

Antecedent Circumstances

It is easier to comment upon *antecedent* circumstances. Subjects often describe conditions in the run-up to their experiences that seem to have had a bearing on the events. Long-term and medium-term antecedents include growth-inducing relationships, inspirational reading, spiritual practices, psychological tensions, and illnesses. Short-term antecedents, in the preceding days, hours, and minutes, include the subject's surroundings ('setting'), mood ('set'), and activities. In some cases, subjects report an immediate or proximate antecedent, an event, action, or state of mind that directly preceded the experience. In Franklin's case, a short-term antecedent was his exposure to natural surroundings, and the immediate antecedent was a blank state of mind.

It is readily assumed that antecedent circumstances are responsible in some way for the experiences. Short-term and immediate antecedents are often called *triggers* because they appear to set off the experiences.[3] There is, of course, no guarantee that an antecedent has any significant connection with the experience it precedes. If a real connection is suspected, there is room for debate over the nature of the link. In what sense do the circumstances 'cause' the experiences? Theorists may contend that antecedent circumstances merely 'release' the experiences, unlocking what is already there in potential, as the word 'trigger' implies, or they may attribute a productive role to the circumstances, alleging that the conditions 'generate' or 'create' the experiences. As we shall see, a celebrated difference of opinion occurred when Aldous Huxley claimed that

[3] Laski (1961), who seems to have popularized the term 'trigger', attends in depth to circumstances. See also Hardy (1979), Coxhead (1985), Hay (1985), Hood (1994), Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997), and Argyle (2000).

psychedelic drugs bring deeper perceptions of the world by opening physiological and psychological controls, the 'brain-valve' and 'ego-filter' ((1954) 1994: 23). R. C. Zaehner's indignant response was to claim that extrovertive experience is simply a manic state produced by the drugs.

The following overview brings out some common or notable antecedent circumstances but makes no claim to be comprehensive.

NATURE

Nature scenery is a common setting for religious experiences and for extrovertive mystical experience in particular.[4] The following is just one of many cases:

> About two years ago, while on holiday in Cornwall, I went for a walk with my sister along the beach. It was a fine day, the sea, cliffs and sky were perfect. I had often seen that particular place before but on this day I felt very strange.
>
> My sister had walked on in front of me; I was left alone. It was as if time had stood still. I could think of nothing, I only felt I was 'somewhere else'. I was part of something bigger and absolutely beyond me. My problems and my life didn't matter at all because I was such a tiny part of a great whole. I felt a tremendous relief. I was aware of my eyes not only looking at, but feeling, the beauty of everything that was there for eternity.
>
> I don't know how long I stood there; it could have been two minutes or twenty. My sister came back, spoke to me and we walked back together. (RERC 1133, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 46–7)

Mountain, desert, jungle, seashore, countryside, park, and garden have all been settings for extrovertive experiences. Subjects may be walking, sitting, lying down, and, less commonly, working or driving, and they are usually alone. Fine weather is common, but not essential. Subjects need not be surrounded by nature: they can be

[4] In Greeley's US survey (1975: 64) of mystical experience (not specifically extrovertive), 'beauties of nature such as sunset' came third at 45%, behind 'listening to music' (49%), and 'prayer' (48%). In the first 3,000 accounts of religious experience submitted to the Religious Experience Research Unit, the most common antecedents were 'depression, despair' (18.4%), 'prayer, meditation' (13.6%), 'natural beauty' (12.3%), and 'participation in religious worship' (11.8%) (Hardy 1979: 28–9). In Hall's small sample (1937: 273–7), nature was the second most common 'determinant', occurring in 78% of the cases, behind 'daylight' at 83%. In Laski's slightly larger sample (1961: 494), the most common triggers for Christians were 'art' (30%), 'religion' (17.5%), and 'nature' (15%), whilst for 'nonbelievers' they were 'sexual love' (21.5%), 'nature' (20.2%), and 'art' (17.7%).

indoors, gazing at, say, a house plant or through a window at the world outside. Sometimes it is the overall prospect that seems to be important; on other occasions, it is a particular sight that stands out. Subjects may be gazing at a tree, a plant, a crystal, a rock, a mountain, water waves, sunlight, clouds, birds in flight, sunrise, sunset, stars in the night sky. It is not only visual impressions that encourage the experiences, but also sounds and scents. One subject took note of these when he reflected on his dozen or so experiences:

1 I was always alone.
2 I was always in the presence of great natural beauty.
3 The feeling came on suddenly and could never be induced.
4 Heat appeared to help, i.e., warm summer weather, usually around noon.
5 A pleasant monotonous sound helped. The singing of cicadas, the wind through pine branches, the lisp of a quiet sea.
6 A pleasant fragrance also helped, especially that of wild thyme. In one case (night and stars) a nearby lemon orchard.

(RERC 904, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 133)

It is important to recognize that nature scenery is not the only setting for extrovertive experiences. Extrovertive mysticism is not simply 'nature mysticism'. For example, Huxley's 'unknown correspondent' was toasting bread in the kitchen on a dark afternoon when her illumination occurred. Dorothea Spinney's experience of the simultaneity of all things began when she was looking out of a bedroom window at lights reflected in the town streets (Zaehner 1958: 50–1). One man's experience of 'knowingness' took place in a factory, in the company of hundreds of people and in the presence of noisy machinery (RERC 189, in Beardsworth 1977: 15–16).

A QUIET STATE OF MIND

Some accounts give the impression that nature settings work by inducing facilitative states of feeling and attention. One such 'mental set' is a quiet state of mind in which thoughts have subsided. The peace may be accompanied by a calm enjoyment or pleasure. John Franklin's experience began when his mind went blank under the lime tree. One woman's experience of light and unity came as she was lying on a bed, looking out of a window at the moors: 'I was completely empty of any thought' (RERC 4230, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 73). Anne Bancroft wondered if her sense of unity

with the rhododendron branch had 'come about because I was still, and not wanting anything' (1977: 67). Flora Courtois's unitive perception of the world began when she was sitting on the edge of her bed, gazing at a desk, with no thoughts (1986). Johannes Anker-Larsen's loving expansion took place as he relaxed in the garden:

> It was still and peaceful—around me and within me. Too good, in fact, to allow one to think much about anything. I just sat there. Then it began to come . . . (Fremantle 1964: 311)

Muz Murray's cosmic experience began when, in a quiet and relaxed state, he was gazing at the sea and sunset (Coxhead 1985: 32). For J.P.W., the quiet state of mind gave way to an intensified awareness of objects and a sense of kinship, which then developed into a full-blown mystical experience:

> On this particular day I wandered alone out to a meadow-like area and sat down against a pine. The day was beautiful and warm: the time shortly before noon . . . I do not know how long I sat, but after a period of 'empty' enjoyment, I became intensely aware of many of the objects which were in the area. The rocks, the trees, the birds, the stream, the clouds, the flowers, became extremely meaningful to me. I realised the rocks, the trees etc. were I; I they; all brothers. And I was exceedingly joyful in realising this kinship.
>
> From this awareness, we flowed into, became, the great Golden Light—the rocks, trees, etc. and this 'I' were no longer just kindred separatenesses. We disappeared. We became the Light which is Love, Bliss. This Light was neither hot nor cold; but Love, Consciousness, Eternity, It. No name was given, nothing was heard. Nor did this 'I' then or after experience frenzy or any sort of fitful or emotional upheaval. Rather Peace, Certainty was known. (Johnson 1959: 65–6)

Circumstances other than nature settings can encourage the inner peace. Indeed, some spiritual practices are intended to stem or interrupt the habitual flow of thought. On the second morning of a Zen meditation retreat, James Austin was waiting at a station on the London Underground when his experience of the world suddenly changed. The view had been uninspiring, but Austin's mind was unfocused and empty of thought, presumably as a result of his Zen practice (1998: 536–9).

CONCERN, COMPASSION, LOVE

Another facilitative state of mind is suggested by other accounts. A man felt compassion when he saw a fish flapping in a basket:

Suddenly everything was transformed, transfigured, translated, transcended. All was fused into one. I was the fish. The sun sang and the road sang. The music shone. The hands of the stall-keeper danced. The branches of the trees danced. All in time with the same music. They were the music and I was the music and I was the fish, the fishermen, the hands of the stall-keeper, the trees, the branches, the road, the sun, the music: all one and nothing separate. Not parts of the one but the one itself. (RERC 1284, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 48)

In some cases, subjects have been worried about sick relatives or friends. 'Totally emptied of self', a mother concentrated on her son's tubercular lung and became 'everywhere and everything' (RERC 4071, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 127–8). A woman went into a chapel in the hope that her own health and strength could be transferred to a dying friend. She then experienced the world as an energetic manifestation of God's power (RERC 3670, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 157). C.A.M. was worried about his asthmatic, female companion as they walked up a hill on a dull, cloudy day. A bright light illumined the locality and brought a sense of loving, benevolent presence (Johnson 1959: 49). An Oxford undergraduate had been trying to help someone in difficulties when the room was filled with warm, white light (RERC, in Beardsworth 1977: 21). A woman was concerned over the safety of a neighbour but discovered that he was all right:

'Good, he's all right then', I thought with relief.

As I said these words to myself, the kitchen and garden were filled with golden light. I became conscious that at the centre of the Universe, and in my garden, was a great pulsing dynamo that ceaselessly poured out love. This love poured over and through me, and I was part of it and it wholly encompassed me. 'Perfectly me, I was perfectly part of perfection.' (RERC 4267, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 56)

There are also occasions when the antecedent love is not tied to compassion or concern. A man was lying in a field under a tree, 'thinking rather deeply of love and the joy it brings', when he felt like a leaf on the tree and seemed to be filled with the rays of the sun (RERC 2035, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 49). Admiration for a spider plant induced one woman into a loving identification with the plant and the rest of the universe (RERC 4138, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 55). Robert May relates that he was walking with a woman he loved when he 'saw the universe as One Living Being animated by the force of Love' (1993: ix). Unusually, May's experience was a joint one, shared with his companion.

INFORMAL MEDITATIONS

Extrovertive experiences sometimes occur when subjects have been thinking about profound matters. Martin Israel had been preoccupied with the extent of the universe and whether anything existed outside it in the run-up to an experience triggered by music (1982: 28–9). A woman was thinking about the immensity of the universe and whether it extends indefinitely when her consciousness expanded through the top of her head and she became aware of 'everything that is' (RERC 4764, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 171). For one man, thoughts on the Kantian theory of knowledge led to a speculative theory of energy, which in turn seemed to be the launching-point for a 'musical' transformation of his surroundings (RERC 4548, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 154–5). Two undergraduates were discussing the 'life force' when one of them experienced an inner and outer luminosity that brought peace, joy, and timelessness (RERC 1519, in Cohen and Phipps 1979: 151–2). C.E.N. was in hospital, recovering from an operation, when his thoughts on the unifying concept of the 'aither' led to an eternal moment (Hall 1937: 154). Arthur Koestler's mystical experience in prison during the Spanish Civil War followed the realization that mathematics provides a precise way of approaching the infinite (1954: 350–2). Perhaps C. P. Snow's experience belongs to the category: the resolution of a scientific research problem gave Snow a sense of closeness with the world, and he was no longer able to 'sneer' at mystics who have described unity experiences (Laski 1961: 421).

Other antecedent 'meditations' have been less intellectual. One woman put her experience down to the sight of a bramble bush laden with fruit after she had been thinking about the beauty and order of nature (RERC 2848, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 52). Another woman, A.M., was thinking about 'God is love' on a trip to a park:

> I am only an ignorant, uneducated person; but, one day, when I was alone in the country, I sat just thinking quietly about 'God is Love'; when, all at once, something opened in myself, and I saw, heard and felt the whole truth of everything. The very trees and grass about me were tingling with love and relationship to me, to God, to all. I saw, and understood, all Life from its beginnings, and our union with God from and through all time. More than this, I saw the future when this inward illumination should be the experience of us all. I may just mention that a rabbit ran across my path, and I felt a thrill of joy in his very life. I was within him, within all, and always had been.

I could not think of separation in those moments of tremendous joy and rest. (Hall 1926: 163)[5]

Walking along the seashore one beautiful morning, C.R.P. was led by developments in her personal life to think about the nature of love:

I was trying to understand just exactly what love is, and I was not sure that he who had professed such love for me understood it either. It must be something more than feeling, or mere emotion, for intuitively I felt that these were evanescent and not to be trusted. I sat down on the sand and pondered long. Very earnestly I sought to understand: then suddenly the solution came. (Hall 1937: 193)

She was surrounded by a white light, sensed the 'oneness of life' in which she was a part, loved all beings, and felt great joy.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

Extrovertive experiences often come unheralded, without any conscious preparation, and they often defy subsequent attempts to re-induce them. After some investigation, one man found that he could induce the experiences at will, at least partially, but his efforts to convey the method to his family proved unsuccessful (RERC 874, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 152).

There are, however, cases in which spiritual practices preceded the experiences and possibly facilitated them. After the death of her husband, one woman took up 'contemplative meditation'. The immediate circumstance of her extrovertive experience was a nature setting, but she wondered if her meditation had some bearing on it (RERC 4103, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 177). Graham Ikin relates that his 'Cosmic Vision' came after six months of intensive 'contemplative prayer' in which he tried to make himself open to whatever God chose to communicate (1973: 174–5). One woman's 'vision of life' came during an hour of silent meditation at a Sikh establishment (RERC 2476, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 163–4). Jiddu Krishnamurti's theosophical meditations in 1922, which included continuous visualization of Lord Maitreya, formed the background to a day-long unitive experience. Krishnamurti's identifications began with a roadmender and his pickaxe, and extended to incorporate grass, a tree, birds, dust, noise, a driver and his car, and then everything, inanimate and animate (Lutyens 1975: 158).

[5] Hall's 'A.M.', Alice Mortley, was author of *Christ in You* (1910), a book of channelled spiritual 'lessons' that has continued to enjoy some popularity.

Western students of Zen have reported extrovertive realizations. James Austin's experience at the time of a Zen retreat has already been noted. A.H.M.'s 'Cosmic Shift' took place on a Zen meditation walk as she concentrated on 'a question about the void' (May 1993: 314–15). On looking up at the sky, she experienced perceptual changes, felt that time no longer existed, intuited the order of the universe, had a loving expansion, and felt both compassion and humour in response to the new perspective.

Extrovertive experiences also attend the complex (and very dangerous) yogic practices designed to reconfigure energy flows in the subtle anatomy and raise the *kuṇḍalinī* energy through higher centres to the crown of the head and beyond. Gopi Krishna's cosmic expansions began when he was visualizing the energy centre at the crown of the head. He felt a sensation near the base of the spine, and then a stream of light seemed to rise into his brain, bringing an expansion of consciousness in all directions (1971: 11–13). Spiritual teachers sometimes play a role, channelling divine grace to the student. The cosmic expansion of Paramahansa Yogananda (1893–1952) took place after his teacher Sri Yukteswar struck him on the chest above the heart. His awareness and sense of identity expanded to take in the immediate surroundings, and then stepped up a level to incorporate the cosmos (1993: 166). The experience occurred in the context of a religious tradition that has a place for both the method of induction and the subsequent experience. The same could be said of Vivianne Crowley's mystical experience during a Wiccan initiation rite. She relates that her inner state of 'stillness and silence' was followed by the arrival of the Goddess, experienced as a downrush of power from head to foot, and then a feeling of 'oneness with the universe' (1990; see Pearson 2003). However, it is interesting that a similar kind of experience befell a schoolgirl, Moyra Caldecott, during her Christian confirmation ceremony, when no such induction or outcome was intended. When the officiating Bishop placed his hand on her head, Caldecott lost her ordinary sense of self, felt energy flow through her body, and experienced all-encompassing consciousness (Coxhead 1985: 44). Caldecott wondered if she had experienced the descent of the Holy Spirit's love.

LITERATURE, MUSIC

Subjects occasionally mention writings that have had an impact on them, either in the long term or in the run-up to their experiences. Both R. M. Bucke and Edward Carpenter found Walt Whitman's

poetry transformative. Bucke's experience in the spring of 1872 took place after an evening of reading 'Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Browning, and especially Whitman' in the company of friends. The reading left him in a calm state of mind in which 'ideas, images, and emotions' flowed 'of themselves' ((1901) 1989: 7). For Carpenter, exposure to the *Bhagavad Gītā* was a factor behind his experience in 1881, along with the recent death of his mother and positive changes in his work and home life (1916: 106, 250–3). Zaehner recounts that his own experience in 1933 was set off by Rimbaud's lines 'O saisons, ô châteaux' in *Une Saison en enfer* (1957: xiv).

Wordsworth's poetry has been a source of mystical inspiration.[6] In Hall's *Observed Illuminates*, there is the case of A.W.O.N.I. ('A Woman Of No Importance') who had read Carpenter's poetic expression of cosmic consciousness, *Towards Democracy*. Her extrovertive realization came in a forest, after reading Wordsworth's 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality':

> Then, and there, I became aware of the Oneness of all Being. I felt, and realized, that the trees around me—the sky—I myself—all things animate and inanimate—lived, and moved, and had our being, in It. Before, this had been a concept. Now, it was realized, and known. (Hall 1926: 56)

Music is sometimes a short-term or immediate antecedent. Warner Allen had his 'timeless moment' at the Queen's Hall, between 'two demi-semi-quavers' of Beethoven's Seventh Symphony (1946: 30). Martin Israel's cosmic experience began when he was listening to the overture of Weber's opera *Oberon* on the radio (1982: 29). Anne Bancroft's 'crowning experience' occurred when she switched on the radio to listen to a concert: at the first note, her consciousness clicked into a state of clarity and emptiness that revealed the beauty and significance of things (1977: 67). The vibrations of a Stradivarius set off Brenda Bunyon's understanding of the cosmic whole (Coxhead 1985: 36).

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Inner tension plays a role in a good number of cases. Depression and existential unrest are fairly common, and recent bereavement is implicated in some cases. The distress seems to find some resolution in the mystical experience, which may come at a moment of crisis or

[6] For examples of the impact of Wordsworth's poetry, see Paffard (1973: 53–61).

through some intervening circumstance, such as a prayer for help or a glimpse of nature. John Middleton Murry's experience came at 'a point of total dereliction and despair' after the death of his wife, Katherine Mansfield. When Murry pushed his sense of isolation to the extreme, there was a sudden reversal in which he felt mystical immersion in the world (1929: 36).[7] For F.W., it was a prayer for help that precipitated an experience of the luminous, unified world (Johnson 1959: 64). For a young woman in the years of the Depression, it was the beauty of nature that initiated the transformation (RERC 2552, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 108–112). She had endured a period of illness, bereavement, and strain, but at night she would find relief in a comforting presence that would help her to sleep. Then, one night, watching the harvest moon, she was transported by beauty and felt a desire to 'melt forever' into it. The urge towards self-transcendence broke through as a flood of love, which in turn lifted her to 'a full awareness of the fourth dimension of the mind'. She saw 'the Truth of all things', unsuspected by 'our fumbling little minds', felt a oneness with the Creator and the creation, and understood 'all the mysteries of space and time'. She understood that all experience is aimed at development, at 'evolution', and saw the meaning of her own life and suffering.

CONFINEMENT

As an occasion for reflection, recuperation, solitude, or anguish, confinement can be a setting of extrovertive experience. Experiences that occur in hospital during convalescence possibly reflect a psychological resurgence after a difficult period. Following an operation, Margaret Prescott Montague had experienced acute depression, apparently brought on by a realization under anaesthetic that there is no God, or that God is indifferent to suffering. The depression had largely subsided by the time of her experience on a dull March day when she was taken out of doors for the first time.[8]

Some experiences have occurred during enforced confinement. His spell in solitary confinement gave Koestler the impetus to pursue the mathematical diversions that led to his experience of the 'hidden

[7] Murry, as 'J.M.M.', is one of Hall's 'recorded illuminates' (1937: 104–113). See also Lea (1959: 99–103).

[8] Other convalescence examples include Holmes (1921: 7–8), C.E.N. (Hall 1937: 154), I.W. (Johnson 1959: 50–1), and RERC (Beardsworth 1977: 51–2).

order of things'. Confinement in Alipore Jail in 1908 gave Aurobindo Ghose the opportunity to read the *Bhagavad Gītā* and engage in meditation. It was at this time that he experienced the world and its contents as Kṛṣṇa (Heehs 1989: 93–4). One of Agehananda Bharati's experiences occurred when he was locked in a cell after an argument with an officer (1976: 40–1). Distress over imprisonment preceded Ron Farquhar's experience of light, love, unity, and knowledge (2002: 7–8). Incarcerated without warning in an army psychiatric hospital, Colin Hannaford (1997) called out in anger for help and then felt propelled through the universe (or a picture of it) into a loving presence that seemed to include everything.

CHILDBIRTH

Mystical experiences at childbirth can be put down to anaesthetics, breathing exercises, *kuṇḍalinī* arousals, or 'near-death' medical emergencies, but in some cases the experiences are tied to the nature of the event itself, the birth of new life.[9] Subjects feel that they are participating in a great web of life. After agonizing labour pains, a woman gave birth to her first child and felt part of the whole 'in an intense timeless moment in which I lost my own sense of self-identity' (RERC 4664, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 60). In a similar vein, a woman felt 'joined with all other living things' for a few minutes after the birth of her second child. Again, there was a diminution of the sense of self (RERC 889, in Beardsworth 1977: 61). The feeling is not restricted to mothers: F. C. Happold felt similarly before his child was born. Anxiety over the impending labour gave way to peace as he became aware of 'a pattern of which everyone and everything was a part', woven by a Power that 'we faintly call Love' (1957: 199).

NEAR DEATH

Some near-death experiences (NDEs) have extrovertive characteristics: unity with the world, all-encompassing knowledge, all-embracing love, the sense that all is well, luminous vision of the world, and so forth. In fact, near-death experience and extrovertive

[9] Laski has a short chapter on childbirth as a trigger (1961: 138–44). For childbirth experience suggestive of *kuṇḍalinī*, see Grof and Grof (1991: 10). Some near-death examples are given in Ring (1984) and Zaleski (1987).

mystical experience are not mutually exclusive categories, for the former is defined by circumstance and the latter by contents. It is quite possible for an experience to be both an NDE and an EME, near-death by circumstance and extrovertive by contents. In one case, a man who was seemingly dead for a few minutes found himself immersed in light, warmth, and peace. He identified with the light, knew all, and contained everything (Joe Geraci, in Ring 1984: 53–4). A drowning 14-year-old boy felt that he was moving along a tunnel of light towards an intense brightness. The light turned out to be a world of calm, love, beauty, and meaning that contained 'all the energy of the universe' (Ring 1984: 54–5).

The near-death 'tunnel' phenomenon described in the second example is not a common feature of extrovertive experiences in general, although it is perhaps more likely to occur in extrovertive cases that follow an 'inward' path, through a shutting out of visual stimuli in near-death crises, meditation, sleep, and other circumstances. Warner Allen's mystical experience in the concert hall is a good example. Caught up in the music, Allen closed his eyes and observed a silver glow that became a circle with a bright centre. The circle changed into a luminous tunnel that took on a golden hue as Allen passed through it and experienced growing feelings of power and peace. The brightness increased, and the tunnel gave way to a place where 'time and motion' were no more, recollected by Allen in dreamlike coastal imagery. There followed a cosmic experience of light, reality, self-knowledge, and a unity of peace and creative energy (Allen 1946: 33; Happold 1970: 133).

Allen's experience is strongly reminiscent of some near-death experiences, but there is no suggestion in his account that it was provoked by a traumatic physical or psychological shock, near-death or otherwise. Allen merely closed his eyes whilst listening to Beethoven's Seventh Symphony. Similarly, my own experience took place without any precipitating trauma of which I am aware, yet it shares features with some near-death experiences, including a passage effect comparable to the tunnel journey. As noted in the Introduction, I once awoke from sleep with a feeling of 'wholeness' and remembered a dream that had some connection with the feeling. In the dream, I was a boy who was running around with other children on a twilight beach. Something distracted me from the energetic play, and I turned aside to stand quietly at the water's edge. There was a tapering object that pointed across the ocean, and, as I looked at the taper, I was drawn along it by a tremendous force. On waking,

I could not remember what, if anything, had happened next, although the peculiar afterglow seemed to have some connection with the journey along the taper. Eventually I was able to recall further details, and it became apparent that the 'destination' across the sea had been an experience of knowledge, vision, and love. The tapering object was not exactly the classic 'tunnel' of NDEs, but it played the same role, constituting a trajectory from a darkened state of consciousness into a luminous state. The experience, like Allen's and other examples recorded in the literature, suggests that attempts to trace the phenomenology of near-death experiences exclusively to the 'dying brain'—to *drastic* physiological changes and psychological reactions to the trauma of dying—are likely to be on the wrong track. It seems to be possible to have NDE-like experiences without the threat of imminent physical death, indeed without any traumatic stimulus at all. As Mark Fox has pointed out, the term 'near-death experience' is not entirely satisfactory because the experiences can take place in a variety of circumstances that involve no physical danger (2003: 325–7).

SLEEP

Subjects sometimes wake from sleep to find themselves in an extrovertive state. A woman awoke to find that 'All is very well' and that the valley outside was filled with the light and love of God (RERC 4614, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 62–3).[10] It is possible that some experiences, such as the above, begin during the hypnopompic transition from sleep to wakefulness, a twilight state of consciousness known for its peculiar phenomena (Mavromatis 1987). Agehananda Bharati's first mystical experience, at the age of 12, occurred during the reverse phase, the hypnagogic transition from wakefulness to sleep: Bharati found that the world had become one and that he was at the centre of it (1976: 39). Perhaps Warner Allen's concert hall experience also belongs to the category, since the tunnel is a common visual image or 'form constant' of hypnagogia and other states, including, of course, near-death experience (Blackmore 1993: 67–93; Fox 2003: 178–86). However, some experiences do occur during sleep and dreams proper, as I myself can attest. Jane Roberts, who later became famous for her channelling of the Seth

[10] See also I.C.G. (Hall 1937: 144), H.M. (Johnson 1959: 66), Genevieve Foster (1985: 42), Starr (1991: 7–8), and Farquhar (2002).

communications, had a mystical experience that took place in a dream. She remembered it only the following day when another mystical expansion occurred (1970: 11).[11]

SEX

There has been some resistance to the idea that sexual activity can be a causal antecedent of spiritual experiences. Acknowledgement of a link may seem to give too much ground to those who would reduce mysticism to sex. Thus, writing at a time when the reductionism of the 'sex-obsessionists' could be strident, Winslow Hall refused to 'admit that sexual intercourse has any causative relation to Illumination' (1937: 288–9). However, others have registered sex as a mystical trigger in their survey studies (Laski 1961: 145–53; Greeley 1974: 91–7), and there are undoubtedly some reports of extrovertive experience during or after intercourse. Two of Agehananda Bharati's experiences followed sex, although the circumstances were not straightforward. The first occurred after a tantric initiation, as Bharati walked back to the ashram, and the second after the effects of an LSD session had largely worn off (1976: 41–4). More clear-cut examples have been presented by Jenny Wade (2000; 2004), who has drawn attention to a variety of 'transcendent sexual experiences', including out-of-the-body experiences, extra-sensory perceptions, past-life memories, possession states, and mystical experiences. Her own transcendent sexual experience had extrovertive features, bringing fusion with the environment after a burst of obliterating luminosity:

> For me, everything in the room was suddenly lost in a bright, white light. Then suddenly everything appeared again as though the floodwaters of the light were receding only with form. I can't even say things appeared because that implies a separate vantage point. But there was really no separation between the things, the bed, the dresser, the window, my lover, me. I was not separate from everything, though objects had the usual edges. The 'spaces' in-between were as alive and full as the 'objects.' We were all not-same, not-different. There was only being. It was all part of me, and I was all of it, just the is-ness. There was simply nothing but me, and I was no more, no less—no more significant than all there was. (Wade 2000: 289–90)

[11] Note also 'intelligent and well-balanced woman' (Laski 1961: 256, 532–3), Masefield (Fremantle 1964: 313), and RERC 4103 (Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 177).

This account, with its depiction of a nondual state of awareness and incorporative unity, is clear evidence that extrovertive experiences really can be triggered by sex. In Wade's sample of transcendent sexual experiences, 17 out of 91 cases (19%) involved some kind of oneness with nature (2004: 204–5), and some of the experiences she places in her 'Void' and 'Unio Mystica' categories of transcendent sex probably also qualify as extrovertive. It is in fact not very surprising that sexual activity should sometimes trigger extrovertive experiences because sex can bring the mental sets found in other facilitative circumstances too, such as loving feelings towards another, a relaxation of self-preoccupation, a focusing of attention, and a quietening down of mental chatter. It is also possible that sexual activity sometimes triggers the experiences through the arousal of a subtle level of physiology, if the *kuṇḍalinī* literature is to be believed.

ANAESTHETICS AND PSYCHEDELICS

The relation between mystical experience and drugs has also been a matter of controversy, and the voluminous literature on drugs and spirituality encompasses many points of view, some highly polarized.[12] Again, there are those who fear that any association with 'disreputable' circumstances will reflect badly on mystical experience. Zaehner's antagonistic reaction to Huxley's free blending of drugs and mysticism was a little more complex: instead of separating drugs and mystical experience completely, he decided that psychedelic experiences and natural mystical experiences are comparable, but he strove to fence them off from the type of mystical experience he truly valued and wanted to defend, namely mystical union with God. At the other end of the spectrum, some promoted psychedelics as a fast track to enlightenment, but the naive enthusiasm of the 1960s came to be tempered by the realization that it usually takes more than mind-blowing experiences to effect lasting personal, social, and spiritual transformations. It is also well recognized that psychedelic experimentation can be hazardous if performed without due preparation and supportive guidance, sparking off panic attacks and psychotic reactions. There has also been

[12] The continuously updated, annotated bibliography (Roberts and Hruby 1995–2003) at the Council on Spiritual Practices website gives a feel for the volume and diversity of the drugs–spirituality literature.

speculation that pre-existing psychopathologies may be unleashed by psychedelics, and persons who belong to vulnerable groups are advised to keep clear of mind-altering substances. Still, many have felt that psychedelics can bring genuine spiritual insights and encourage healing and growth if used wisely, and some indigenous cultures have a revered place for psychedelics in their religious practices.[13]

Altered states of consciousness induced by psychedelic substances are highly variable, unpredictable, and dependent on set and setting. They can involve gross perceptual distortions, geometrical patterns, cartoon-like pictures, personal, cultural, historical, religious, and mythic imagery, and encounters with plant, animal, demonic, angelic, alien, and machine-like intelligences. They are also prone to take disturbing turns, becoming frightening, threatening, and even horrific. Many psychedelic experiences, in their bizarreness and complexity, are not comparable to spontaneous extrovertive experiences, although in some cases there is considerable overlap. Shared phenomenology can include clarified perceptions, luminosity, beauty, unity, insights, meaning, ego-relaxation, realness, temporal inclusivity, and so forth. I would not be surprised if every extrovertive characteristic and variant I have noted in Chapter 2 were found instantiated in the literature of drug experiences,[14] and I am inclined to agree with Raynor Johnson (1959: 149–65) that anaesthetics and psychedelics do provide a route to genuine mystical experience, if a rather unpredictable and hazardous one.

However, investigators have sometimes maintained that there are significant differences between drug-induced mystical experiences and those that occur under spontaneous or meditative circumstances (e.g. Masters and Houston 1973: 302–3; Austin 1998: 426–31). Likewise, subjects familiar with both spontaneous and drug-induced mystical states sometimes judge the latter inferior. For example, Allan Smith found that he was unable to repeat his spontaneous experience of cosmic consciousness by taking LSD. Although there were many general similarities between his episode of cosmic consciousness and the subsequent LSD experiences, close examination showed that the similarities were superficial. Smith and Tart

[13] For sympathetic overviews, see Cortright (1997), and Saunders, Saunders, and Pauli (2000). The latter contains a number of case studies.

[14] Recent anthologies include Melechi (1998), Jay (1999), and Hayes (2000). Merkur (1998) brings together many examples in his detailed classificatory scheme.

concluded that the two types of experience are different states of consciousness (1998: 103–6). For example, LSD brought perceptual clarity and intensity, whereas cosmic consciousness brought an enveloping luminosity that interfered with perception. The noetic qualities were also different: LSD brought comprehension of 'relations with persons or things' and their significance; cosmic consciousness brought an all-encompassing knowledge that engendered great certainty and had a life-changing impact, unlike the LSD insights. Smith's detailed, personal observations are valuable, but they are dependent on his one cosmic experience and his LSD experiences. Neither should be taken as fully representative. For example, many extrovertive experiences, including some episodes of full-blown cosmic consciousness, involve very clear perceptions of the world. Smith's obliterating light is just one manifestation of luminosity in extrovertive experience (see 'Vision', Chapter 2). Conversely, psychedelic experiences sometimes do bring a sense of all-encompassing knowledge, and they have encouraged positive life-changes.

In another case, a woman found that mescaline and hashish experiences were inferior to her spontaneous experience in natural surroundings, but she thought that the differences may not be fundamental:

> I felt these drug experiences were not the same, not only because I didn't learn anything as profound, but also because my conscious self wasn't the same in relation to what I saw, but maybe this sort of thing is a question of degree. These drug experiences seemed inferior, impermanent, working upon me; glossier. (RERC 2366, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 51)

In contrast, John Middleton Murry (1929: 129–30) thought that his mystical experience was phenomenologically indistinguishable from a subsequent anaesthetic experience, for both brought an 'immediate awareness of an all-pervading Unity'. But he noted that the two experiences had different relations with their circumstances and consequences. In Murry's case, the mystical experience intervened to heal a state of psychological division, whereas the subsequent anaesthetic experience served no such purpose and seemed irrelevant.

In the three cases just noted, the drug experiences were *subsequent* to the drug-free experiences and had far less personal impact. But as Smith points out, drug experiences may have more impact if they occur first. And Smith also acknowledges that his own drug-induced

experiences may not have been sufficiently deep to emulate cosmic consciousness. It is notable that in Murry's case the phenomenologies were comparable, and some accounts of drug-induced experiences do read like descriptions of full-blown cosmic mystical experience. It is true that drugs trigger these experiences only occasionally, and it has been said that cosmic consciousness induced by drugs 'seems to occur only once or twice for those who experience it and generally does not recur' (see Cortright 1997: 185). It seems that drugs do not provide a dependable, repeatable way to cosmic mystical experience.

ORGANIC DISORDERS

Mystical experiences, including extrovertive experiences, sometimes appear to have a link with organic disorders and physical illnesses. Epileptic seizures are, on occasions, attended by mystical and cosmic feelings (see Chapter 7). Sometimes, however, the connection is unclear. For instance, intensive practice of Transcendental Meditation probably had some bearing on Suzanne Segal's long-term experiences of 'emptiness' and 'vastness', for they were prefigured by comparable, short-term experiences during her meditative training (1998: 12–13, 17). But it is notable that a brain tumour was eventually diagnosed, shortly after her experience of vastness became more intense and disturbing (1998: 173–5). It may be speculated that the organic disorder contributed to the intensification of the experience when she became ill, and perhaps even to the persistence of the experience over the previous years. Similarly, it may be conjectured that John Wren-Lewis's experience of the radiant darkness, noted in Chapter 2, endured for so long because it had some connection with permanent neurophysiological changes caused by his near-fatal poisoning and coma (see Horgan 2003: 121).

However, it is a common mistake to assume that mystical experience is not genuine if it is associated with an organic (or psychological) disorder. Mystical experiences have often been dismissed as products of brain pathology, and even those sympathetic to the experiences may assume that the presence of organic pathology detracts from their validity. For instance, B. J. F. Laubscher, a psychiatrist who had an interest in the paranormal, accepted the genuineness of one man's extrovertive mystical experience because there was no invalidating medical history: 'In the absence of any irrational episode in his life and any history suggestive of epilepsy

I came to the conclusion that his was a true mystic state of consciousness' (1972: 229–30). The fallacy is to suppose that the validity of an experience depends on the nature of its circumstances, with no appreciation that circumstances, such as organic disorders, mental illnesses, and drugs, may be releasing triggers rather than productive causes. Of course, there is the converse danger that genuine mystical experiences precipitated by organic or psychological disorders will be interpreted as purely mystical, with the triggering disorders going unrecognized until they become glaringly obvious and perhaps untreatable. It is to be hoped that symptoms of a triggering disorder will be distinguishable from the mystical features and act as warning signs that more is going on than mystical experience alone.

Consequences

Studies have found that religious experiences encourage psychological well-being, positive attitudes towards others, and interest in the spiritual life (see Argyle 2000: 71–2). These bland generalizations no doubt mask the range and complexity of individual responses, and gloss over the real psychological and social tensions that 'spiritual emergence' can bring, but they do at least suggest an overall tendency towards health and growth. Accounts of extrovertive mystical experience give a similar picture and also sometimes hint at the complications.

IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES

Clarity of perception, unity, love, and feelings of peace and happiness can persist beyond the central experience as an afterglow, lasting a few minutes, hours, or weeks. Subjects often feel grateful for their experiences, and they may be left with the conviction that they came into contact with reality. There can also be bewilderment: subjects wonder what happened to them. Surprise and puzzlement is a natural reaction, particularly if the experiences have come out of the blue, with subjects having had no inkling that such experiences ever occur. In some cases, subjects are so disconcerted that they question their own sanity, despite the generally positive tone of the experiences. It can be reassuring to discover that others have had similar experiences. Puzzlement and curiosity can persist for years, encouraging subjects to seek out information about mystical

experiences and spiritual teachings, and engage in meditative practices. Some may eventually undertake sustained research and put forward explanations (e.g. Bucke, Carpenter, Zaehner).

After their experiences, subjects are sometimes struck by the comparative inferiority of ordinary experience. One man felt restored by his experience, but he found that the world seemed 'clumsy' in comparison:

> My subsequent reaction—having been at a rather low ebb—was to be hesitantly restored. Life around me was somehow lighter in both meanings of the word. Particularly, I found this world to be very gross—large, clumsy—almost unbelievably so. (RERC 4548, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 154)

R. H. Ward had noticed a similar effect at the *beginning* of his nitrous oxide experience: the 'ordinary world' seemed 'unreal, slow and clumsy' as he left it behind (1957: 27). When Ancilla came out of her experience, she was momentarily overjoyed by her discovery of the spiritual nature of the world, but the elation was followed by a 'humiliating and gross' feeling associated with a 'taste-image' of food that came into her mind: 'And how it enraged me! So sordid, such a bump to the earth!' (1955: 22).

Extrovertive experiences, like other spiritual experiences, can have an unbalancing effect, leaving in their wake difficult emotions, misinterpretations, obstinate convictions, and unwholesome behaviours.[15] Edward Carpenter was of the opinion that in many cases of consciousness expansion 'the very novelty and strangeness of the experiences give rise to phantasmal trains of delusive speculation' (1892: 155), and he was later to describe one such case he had known personally, in which 'the elements of real inspiration and of mental aberration' were conjoined (1916: 183–9). Carpenter was visited by an American gold miner whose visions of the transfigured world were followed by commanding voices, extreme fasting, and a messianic mission to convert the nations. Despite the obvious psychopathology, Carpenter was willing to acknowledge that contact with higher consciousness had taken place, and he gave sensible advice to his visitor. But not all contacts result in disturbance. In Carpenter's

[15] On the complications and dangers of spiritual emergence, see for instance Grof and Grof (1989; 1991), and Bragdon (1993). The topic has been a matter of concern within Jungian psychology (e.g. Perry 1999) and psychosynthesis (e.g. Assagioli (1961) 1975; Ferrucci 1982: 155–62). Cortright provides a succinct overview (1997: 155–79, 209–15).

view, Walt Whitman was the pre-eminent example of one who maintained balance in the face of the 'blinding glare at the mouth of Plato's cavern' (1906*a*: 60–6). A question naturally arises: why do some mystical experiences pass without significant adverse effects, whereas others lead to turbulence and even psychotic developments? Apart from variations in the character and intensity of the experiences themselves, psychological, social, and cultural differences no doubt play a role, affecting the ways in which subjects understand and act upon their experiences. For example, personality type, pre-existing neurotic and psychotic conditions, interpretative frameworks available to subjects, and the reactions of family, friends, and professionals will all have an impact.

The aftermath of intense or prolonged extrovertive experiences can be especially difficult. Yogananda felt enormous 'disappointment' when he found himself confined once more to 'the humiliating cage of a body' (1993: 168). Anne Bancroft was 'desolate' when her three-day-long experience came to an end (1977: 68). At the age of 14, Mrs L. was plunged into despair after a week of ecstatic oneness and love. After months of searching, some of the love and understanding gradually returned, but without the ecstasy (Johnson 1959: 23–4). A.G.F. was in a state of elation for several months, but she then descended into a period of instability:

> I gradually passed into an alternation of extremes. At one time I would be in an ecstasy of delight, and, an hour later, in a depth of unreasonable wretchedness. My life became an indescribable turmoil. Man could no longer please me, and I could not please God. But by continued steady prayer for greater love, I was able to climb out of my miserable state in a few weeks. (Hall 1937: 250)[16]

After four days of intense experience, Irina Starr's transformed vision of the world darkened and came to an end, precipitating two days of depression during which everything appeared heavy, drab, and lifeless. She felt 'cast out of Eden' (1991: 21–3). One man used a similar comparison to express the sense of loss that accompanied the fading of his experience: 'I can only describe it as the feeling of an

[16] 'A.G.F.' is Hall's abbreviation for the anonymous Author of *The Golden Fountain*, published in 1919. In addition to Hall (1937: 239–62), see Younghusband (1935: 178–213) and Fremantle (1964: 370–6). In a recent edition of *The Golden Fountain*, the author has been identified as Lilian Staveley (d. 1928), wife of Brigadier General William Cathcart Staveley, whose temporary disappearance in action during the First World War was apparently a precipitating factor behind A.G.F.'s experience.

angel banished from the Courts of Light' (RERC 189, in Beardsworth 1977: 16). The experience had been a momentary interlude in a period of 'heavy depression and sadness', which perhaps explains why the sense of loss was so acute. After a few moments of relief, he had been plunged back into the depressive state of mind. A similar result befell the woman who momentarily experienced relief from her sufferings in the years of the Depression:

> The return to ordinary consciousness was almost too much. You cannot know, you cannot imagine the pain and shock, the horrible sense of *loss*, the awful *loneliness*. And all must be borne alone and in silence, for there is no one capable of understanding, advising, comforting; no other human being to look at you and say, 'I know, I understand.' Only God is left and sometimes He seems awfully far away. (RERC 2552, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 111)

Subjects welcome the new perspectives brought by their experiences, but there is a price to be paid. The return to ordinary consciousness can be difficult, and subjects are left with the challenge of integrating the exalted perspectives into the rough-and-tumble of everyday life, which is no easy task.

LONGER-TERM CONSEQUENCES

At the very least, subjects comment that they have never forgotten their experiences. If nothing else, the experiences are memorable. Others go so far as to assert that the experiences have been the most important events in their lives, exerting a far-reaching influence. Long-term improvements stimulated by the experiences can include increased contentment, peace, happiness, a sense of perspective, deepened love, empathy, tolerance, forgiveness, and no fear of death. When difficult periods subsequently arise, memories of the experiences can provide a source of stability, an 'anchor' (RERC 4384, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 114) or 'inner rock' (RERC 4405, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 53), a feeling that a firm centre remains despite the unavoidable highs and lows that life brings. Unity and love glimpsed in the experiences can be a spur to action in the world. Edward Carpenter's experience of cosmic consciousness was closely tied to his many humanitarian concerns. X.Y.'s childhood experience in nature found immediate and long-lasting expression:

> How do I know that this event was more than a child's play and fancy? Well! it has influenced my life ever since. It influenced me immediately in three

ways. The kneeling at the stone set up a habit. Those fits of fury with my brothers ceased. This experience led me to help a family of three dirty neglected children who lived near. (Johnson 1959: 40)

Subjects may be left with beliefs that stem from their experiential insights, such as the essential 'all-rightness' of the world and the importance of love. The experiences can bring intellectual, moral, and spiritual conversions, encouraging exploration of religious matters and turning atheistic, materialist, and agnostic outlooks into spiritual ones.[17] For instance, Muz Murray relates that his mystical experience shattered his preconceptions about the world, shifting him away from unbelief and contempt of mysticism, and leading to significant changes in his way of life (Coxhead 1985: 32).

COMMUNICATION

Like some other mystical and non-ordinary occurrences, extrovertive experiences raise communication issues for those who have them. Should the experiences be communicated? Can they be communicated? Both issues—the *taboo* on communication and the *ineffability* of mystical experience—are raised by the woman whose concern for her neighbour exposed her to the dynamo of love at the centre of the universe:

The vision was gone in a moment, leaving me with a strong desire to rush out and embrace anyone I could find, including Mr C! At the same time, I had a very strong feeling that the vision was holy and not to be chatted about. Indeed, I did not speak of it except to my husband for some years. Another apprehension was that it was outside time. I also find the words I use to describe it quite inadequate. It was overwhelmingly real, more real than anything I had experienced, although I had been in love, and the feelings after the birth of each of my children had been wonderful. The vision was of a far 'realler' quality. To deny it would be the ultimate sin, blasphemy. (RERC 4267, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 56)

Subjects often feel reluctant to discuss their experiences with others. The taboo can derive from several concerns.[18] In the example above, it was the 'holiness' of the experience that put it off-limits. It

[17] e.g. Ancilla (1955: vii), Wren-Lewis (1988: 114), May (1993: ix), RERC 2461 (Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 136), RERC 4415 (Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 54), Bingham (Corcoran 1996: 129–32), Smith (Smith and Tart 1998: 99).

[18] Maxwell and Tschudin (1996: 16–17) discuss the 'taboo'. See also Kellehear (1996: 59–79) on near-death experiences.

would be profanity to talk about a sacred experience for no good reason. In the following case, there is concern that the 'power' of the experience to work its effects would be dissipated if it were made the topic of idle conversation and analysis:

> I experienced a definite prohibition, not in words yet clear and precise, that I must tell no one at all, nor write it down (hence the seven cryptic words standing alone in my journal), nor even hint at what I had known. It was there, as one puts a secret into a child's hand, and closes his fingers over it. It was whole, complete, and not to be analysed, fussed over, frittered away. It was within me and would grow like the mustard-seed of the parable and fill all my mind, though I did not know that then. (Ancilla 1955: 23)

There can also be anxiety that a personally meaningful experience will be undermined by unsympathetic scrutiny (e.g. RERC 4693, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 107–8) or dismissed as madness (e.g. Genevieve Foster 1985: 43).

Subjects often remark on their inability to give adequate expression to their experiences, and a great deal has been written about the purported ineffability of mystical experience. There can be several reasons for difficulty of expression: details may not be fully recallable and so cannot be described; features such as knowledge, bliss, and love are recognized but are so comprehensive, complex, or intense that the subject remarks that the experience cannot be conveyed; some features are completely unprecedented and so the descriptive vocabulary is unavailable. In the case of extrovertive experience, the first two are certainly evident. For example, subjects may remember that they understood the meaning of existence but cannot remember what the meaning was. Or subjects employ terms such as unity and joy but decide that these give only a feeble impression of the depth of experience:

> I would like to add that no words seem to me able to convey a thousandth part of the *depth* and the *reality* of that Experience, even so far as my own taste of it has gone. (B.E.B., in Hall 1937: 81–2)

Whereas some mystical experiences defy description because they are so unlike ordinary experience, extrovertive experiences are perhaps less subject to the problem because they often have affinities with ordinary experience and are therefore describable to some extent. Although words may not express the depth and intensity, they are able to give some sense of the characteristics.

This page intentionally left blank

PART II
The Explanations

This page intentionally left blank

4
Divine Cosmos

Encountering Spirit in Nature

Extrovertive mystical experiences are a puzzle. What lies behind their peculiar characteristics, the unity, knowledge, love, luminosity, expanded vision, self-transformation? Do the experiences really put mystics in touch with deeper aspects of reality? Why are the circumstances so varied, ranging from beautiful scenery, compassionate love, and music, to mental distress, physical illness, and psychedelic drugs? Extraordinary phenomena attract conflicting explanations, and extrovertive mystical experiences have been no exception. Some explanations have stayed firmly within naturalistic bounds, tracing the experiences to biological, psychological, and social factors alone. Other explanations have been rooted in the transpersonal, finding the essence of extrovertive experience in religious, supernatural, and metaphysical realities unrecognized by naturalistic science. Transpersonal explanations have kinship with the interpretations that mystics often make themselves: many are left with the conviction that their experiences put them in touch with spiritual beings or deeper realities.

Transpersonal approaches dominate the oldest stratum of extrovertive explanation and therefore constitute a logical starting point for study. Historically, four approaches stand out, distinguished by their core ideas:

1. A *cosmic consciousness* that intuits (Bucke) or contains (Carpenter) the world;
2. The *immanence of the creator God* in the creation (Inge, Underhill);
3. *Innate knowledge* of a spiritual reality in and behind the world (Otto);
4. A universal *pure consciousness* distinct from the world (Stace).

The first three approaches bring spirit and nature together in close relation: extrovertive mystics discover the divine in the world. The fourth sets up a gulf between spirit and nature: according to its advocate, W. T. Stace, extrovertive mystics apprehend two distinct realms simultaneously, the natural world of sensory-intellectual

consciousness and the spiritual world of pure consciousness. In the present chapter, we shall be concerned with the spirit–nature integrationists. Stace's spirit–nature separationism will be scrutinized in the next chapter.

The first two approaches date from the turn of the twentieth century and partake of the world-affirming spirituality of the time. Secular proponents of cosmic consciousness and liberal Christian defenders of divine immanence shared a faith in the spiritual nature of the universe and both esteemed mystical experiences of the natural world. Both sets of theorists looked outside the bounds of narrowly conceived religion for philosophical or scientific ideas that would shed light on mystical experience, although the secular theorists went further in this direction than their Christian counterparts. R. M. Bucke (1837–1902) and Edward Carpenter (1844–1929) drew on contemporary theories of evolution, neurology, and the subconscious, and Carpenter also had recourse to idealist philosophy. For their part, the liberal Christian theorists supplemented the immanental side of Christian spirituality with philosophical ideas. W. R. Inge (1860–1954) combined Christianity with Platonism, and Evelyn Underhill (1875–1941) found Henri Bergson's 'vitalism' suggestive. A little later, Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) took up a modified Kantianism that allowed some knowledge of spiritual reality.

Bucke's name lives on in the study of mysticism through his book *Cosmic Consciousness*, which has continued to attract popular interest for its proclamation of a coming evolutionary leap in human consciousness and for the collection of spiritual cases that makes up about two-thirds of the book. It has also attracted considerable scholarly criticism for its methodological and theoretical weaknesses. In contrast, Carpenter's work, although influential in its day, faded from view after his death, and his work on mystical experience has not been widely known at either a popular or scholarly level. His understanding of cosmic consciousness receives special attention here not only because it has been neglected but also because it is theoretically rich, bringing together Romantic, modernist, and Hindu ideas. Carpenter was not so resolutely 'scientific' as Bucke, and they diverged in significant ways. Amongst the strands that interweave in Carpenter's understanding of cosmic consciousness, there is a theory of race-consciousness that pre-dates

C. G. Jung's early thoughts on the collective unconscious by a few years. Whereas some commentators, notably R. C. Zaehner, have tended to conflate the Jungian collective unconscious with cosmic consciousness, Carpenter was clear that race-consciousness and cosmic consciousness constitute distinct but related levels.

The lasting contribution of Inge, Underhill, and Otto to the study of extrovertive experience was typological. Liberal Christian theism acknowledges immanent as well as transcendent aspects of God, a distinction that readily translates into a twofold typology of mystical experience. Transcendent experience of God in the depths of the soul is balanced with immanent experience of God in the world. Whereas Inge and Underhill took the spiritual presence to be God or the divine mind, Otto was not so specific because he was engaged in a study of mysticism across traditions. In the context of his comparative study, the reality could be the personal God of theistic religion or the impersonal Absolute of monistic religion. We shall see that Otto's methodologically neutral treatment acted as a historical and conceptual route from the God-centred understandings of Inge and Underhill to Stace's unreservedly atheistic yet transpersonal approach.

Pioneers of Cosmic Consciousness: Bucke and Carpenter

The idea of cosmic consciousness came to prominence at the beginning of the twentieth century through the efforts of R. M. Bucke and Edward Carpenter, both of whom had enjoyed expansive mystical experiences, in 1872 and 1881 respectively. As fellow Whitman admirers, they were in contact from 1880, and they met for the first time in 1884 when Carpenter visited Canada. Their main correspondence on mystical experience took place in the early 1890s when their theorizing took more definite shape and the phenomenon acquired its enduring name 'cosmic consciousness'. Both Bucke and Carpenter understood cosmic consciousness as an evolutionary development, but they diverged on important points. Bucke approached the subject as a nineteenth-century medical man, too ready to indulge in simplistic scientific rationalizations; Carpenter was at heart a late Romantic who subordinated the evolutionary science to a spiritual vision of human development.

AN EMERGENT MENTAL FACULTY: BUCKE'S EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY

Richard Maurice Bucke, a descendant of Sir Robert Walpole, was born in Methwold, Norfolk, in 1837. In the following year, his family emigrated to Upper Canada, settling on a homestead near London. After adventures in the American Midwest and the Sierra Nevadas, he returned to Canada and took up medical studies, entered general practice in 1864, and became superintendent of the London asylum in 1877, a post he held until his death in 1902.[1] In *Cosmic Consciousness* (1901), Bucke's medical interests in mental evolution and degeneration were combined with his insights into mystical experience. According to Bucke, a new mental faculty is beginning to emerge in mankind, one that intuits the wholeness and spiritual nature of the universe.

Bucke originally intended *Cosmic Consciousness* to address not only mysticism but also hypnotism, supernormal powers, and spiritualism ((1901) 1989: 304). As such, the book was a product of its time. In his study of Bucke and late nineteenth-century psychiatry, S. E. D. Shortt contextualizes *Cosmic Consciousness* in the medical psychology of the time, interest in the subconscious, and psychical research, and he also attends to the earlier phases of Bucke's intellectual journey, from the Universalist sympathies of his youth to atheism, evolutionism, Comtean positivism, and devotion to Walt Whitman (1986: 115–23). Indeed, Bucke's scheme of mental evolution shares the linear progressivism of the Comtean three stages of human knowledge. The latter starts with the type of thinking characteristic of the theological mind, proceeds through a metaphysical stage, and culminates in positivist science, a somewhat unmystical outcome, although the Comtean religion of 'humanity' is a kind of unity.

On a superficial reading, it may be thought that Bucke's cosmic consciousness is a consciousness that belongs to the universe as a whole. However, Bucke treats cosmic consciousness as a human, psychological *faculty* that has come into being through natural, evolutionary development. It is a consciousness of the cosmos, not the cosmos's own consciousness. The evolutionary process begins when sense-impressions ('percepts') become generalized into

[1] On Bucke's thought, see Horne (1964), Armour and Trott (1981), Cook (1985: 86–104), and Shortt (1986). For the literature on Bucke's life and thought, see Shortt (1986: 163–4; 1994).

abstract 'recepts', yielding the Simple Consciousness possessed by higher animals and human beings. When percepts and recepts combine into fully abstracted and linguistically labelled 'concepts', the stage of Self Consciousness emerges, possessed by humankind alone. Finally, percepts, recepts, concepts, and moral elements combine in a few advanced cases of human development to give the 'intuitions' of the 'Supra Conceptual intellect'. There is a linear progression from basic sense-impressions to complex cosmic consciousness.

Bucke adopted the percept–recept–concept scheme from Charles Darwin's friend and disciple G. J. Romanes (1848–94), who, in *Mental Evolution in Man* (1888), had attempted to trace the emergence of 'self-consciousness' and show its continuity with earlier evolutionary stages in the animal kingdom. It is therefore interesting that after Darwin's death in 1882, Romanes's materialism began to give way to a dual-aspect monism, and, significantly, to the idea of the 'Superconscious', the barely conceivable, supervolitional, superpersonal, superconscious mental aspect of the world, responsible for the order we observe in the cosmos (Romanes 1895: 103–18, 167–70).[2] Romanes showed no awareness of the possibility of mystical union with the Superconscious, but he discussed communion with it through prayer from the vantage point of his dual-aspect monism. In *Cosmic Consciousness*, Bucke made no reference to these developments in Romanes's thought, and perhaps he was unaware of them. Both Romanes and Bucke viewed the universe as ordered and rejected materialism, but whereas Romanes's Superconscious is the mental, integrative aspect of the entire cosmos, Bucke's cosmic consciousness is merely a human faculty that apprehends the cosmic order. Bucke's faculty of cosmic consciousness knows the cosmos as 'entirely immaterial, entirely spiritual and entirely alive' ((1901) 1989: 14). The theory therefore takes a spiritual stance on the universe. The cosmos is in some sense divine, although it is not clear how Bucke understood its spiritual nature. Bucke seems to make a pantheistic identification of God and nature when he declares that the faculty of cosmic consciousness reveals 'that the universe is God and that God is the universe' ((1901) 1989: 14). Zaehner understood Bucke's phrase pantheistically when he reminisced that his own extrovertive experience had also led him to pantheistic conclusions, before he realized the error of his ways

[2] See Turner (1974: 134–63) and Richards (1987: 334–75). On Romanes's interest in psychical research, see Oppenheim (1985: 278–90).

(1974*b*: 210–11). However, Bucke had very little to say about God in *Cosmic Consciousness*, a work that is psychological rather than theological or metaphysical, and it is unclear what he intended by the statement.

Bucke's theory, then, has two disconnected components, one psychological and the other metaphysical: first, there is the faculty of Cosmic Consciousness, built up from simpler mental operations during a natural process of intellectual and moral evolution; second, there is the cosmos itself, which is intuited by the new faculty to be immaterial, spiritual, alive, and ordered in a way that ensures the post-mortem survival and ultimate good of all. Bucke's theoretical efforts were expended on the first component, the evolution of the psychological faculty. We are not told how the faculty intuits the true nature of the cosmos. It is not at all obvious how a faculty put together through simple mental association could grasp the cosmic immensities. Nor are we told in what way the cosmos is immaterial, spiritual, and alive. Does the universe as a whole have a mental *aspect*, such as Romanes's integrative Superconscious? Or is the universe to be understood in idealist fashion as the contents of a greater consciousness, as Carpenter suggested? Bucke supposed that cosmic consciousness discovers the universe to be 'entirely immaterial', so perhaps he had idealism in mind. To address such questions, Bucke would have had to supplement his psychological theorizing with metaphysics, and he might have moved in this direction if his life had not been cut short by an accident in 1902, soon after the publication of *Cosmic Consciousness*. As they stand, his contributions to the study of extrovertive experience are primarily phenomenological and psychological. He studied the characteristics of cosmic consciousness fairly systematically, as we noted in Chapter 2, and he put forward a theory of mental development. The psychological theory did not properly engage with the phenomenology, other than to explain the intellectual illuminations and moral elevations of cosmic consciousness as evolutionary developments of ordinary intellectual and moral elements.

SPIRALLING TOWARDS THE SELF: CARPENTER'S EVOLUTIONARY SPIRITUALITY

In the early years of the twentieth century, Edward Carpenter was widely known as a radical socialist, humanitarian, pacifist, commentator on human relationships and sexuality, and mystical thinker.

But his ideas were too openly spiritual and his socialism too personal to fare well as the century took on its dominant philosophical and political colours, and his defence of 'homogenic love' in an era when homosexuality was criminalized and widely pathologized may have hindered due acknowledgement of his contributions. Carpenter's popularity went into decline after the First World War and faded upon his death, but he attracted attention again in the 1960s for his social and sexual radicalism and for his influence on D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, and other literary and artistic notables.[3] In the recent literature on Carpenter, there has been some discussion of his mystical thought, but it has received scant attention from scholars of mysticism, who most often associate cosmic consciousness with Bucke. Nevertheless, Carpenter was as much the originator of the idea, and he gave the more sophisticated discussion.

After an upper-middle-class upbringing in Brighton, Carpenter read mathematics at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he was appointed lecturer, taking the clerical fellowship vacated by Leslie Stephen. Ordained deacon in 1869 and priest in 1870, he served for a while as curate under F. D. Maurice, one of the founders of Christian Socialism. However, disappointment with his clerical duties and personal life set in, and Carpenter relinquished holy orders in 1874 to take up University Extension work in Yorkshire and the North Midlands, lecturing on astronomy, physics, and music. In search of a more fulfilling way of life, he took to a rural existence in the early 1880s and set about exposing commercialism, empire, scientism, social Darwinism, and other idols of the age.

Carpenter's understanding of cosmic consciousness, as it developed from the 1880s onwards, brought together several strands, notably (1) an appreciation of the subject–object relation, and man's unity with nature, informed by classical, Romantic, and Hindu ideas, (2) a three-stage evolutionary scheme applied to the development of society, gender relations, the nervous system, consciousness, and religion, reflecting the key Romantic theme of 'spiral' development, (3) the idea of a universal Self, suggested by Whitman, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and the *Upaniṣads*, (4) an idealist

[3] Recent studies of Carpenter's life and thought include Rowbotham (1977), Tsuzuki (1980), and the collection edited by Brown (1990). Carpenter's influence and reputation are discussed by Nield (1974; 1990), Rowbotham (1977: 122–8), Henderson (1987), and Brown (1989*a*: 35–40; 1990: 12–15). The pre-1990 literature on Carpenter is surveyed by Brown (1989*a*, *b*).

analysis of matter, drawing on Berkeley, J. F. Ferrier, and other idealists, (5) the notion of subliminal consciousness, as developed at the time by Frederic Myers and others, (6) speculations about cellular consciousness and the reintegration of the nervous system, and (7) a theory of embodied race-consciousness. Carpenter also made a passing association between cosmic consciousness and four-dimensional space, a link that P. D. Ouspensky was to follow up (see Henderson 1983; 1987). More generally, Carpenter's understanding of cosmic consciousness cannot be separated from his own experience of expanded consciousness, his wide-ranging egalitarian and humanitarian concerns, and his emotional, sexual, and social ideal of comradely relationships.[4] All these factors contributed to Carpenter's understanding and advocacy of cosmic consciousness, but to appreciate his theoretical framework it will be sufficient to highlight the following areas: subject–object nonduality, spiral evolution, reintegration of the nervous system, race-consciousness, the universal Self, and idealism. Carpenter's theory of race-consciousness is additionally interesting because it anticipates Jung's theory of the collective unconscious, but unlike the latter, it is set within a framework that unequivocally accepts the possibility of direct experiential contact with ultimate reality. Carpenter's idealism, which forms the metaphysical core of his understanding of cosmic consciousness, will be raised in Chapter 8, as part of an overview of mind–body theorizing.

In 1881, Carpenter experienced a liberating, unitive expansion. The immediate force of the revelation was channelled into the Whitmanesque volume of poetry *Towards Democracy* (1883). The experience, described most fully in a short article (1894) appended to later editions of *Towards Democracy* and quoted in full in Bucke's *Cosmic*

[4] Rahman (1987) presses a connection between Carpenter's homosexuality and his theorizing of cosmic consciousness: sexual and emotional alienation found resolution in a spiritualized ideal of comradeship. Carpenter himself drew a connection, but in a rather different way. Drawing on the evidence of anthropology, mythology, and religion, he suggested that homosexuality gives a predisposition towards spiritual experience, whether the divinatory and prophetic phenomena of primitive societies or the advanced state of cosmic consciousness. Psychic and spiritual abilities, he conjectured, may depend on a blending of masculine and feminine qualities, of logic and intuition, a 'bisexuality' of temperament (Carpenter 1914; 1927: 90–3, 136–42; Carpenter and Barnefield 1925: 38–45). To some of his friends, Carpenter was the epitome of this blended condition (e.g. Lewis 1915: 299–300; Glasier 1931: 87–8). On Carpenter's open yet cautious revelation of his homosexuality in *My Days and Dreams* (1916), see Buckton (1998).

Consciousness, took place after several factors had combined to ease the intellectual, emotional, and sexual tensions of Carpenter's earlier years. One liberating influence was his exposure to the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which he had received from his Ceylonese friend Ponnambalam Arunachalam. Several years later, Carpenter encountered another form of Hindu mystical theism when, at the invitation of Arunachalam, he went to Ceylon and India (1890–1), a visit described in his book *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta* (1892). In Ceylon, Carpenter met Arunachalam's guru 'Gñáni Ramaswámy', who was visiting from Tanjore. Ramaswamy, known as 'the Grammarian' ('Elúkhanam') in consequence of his formidable learning, had daily meetings with Carpenter for nearly two months, with Arunachalam acting as interpreter (see Carpenter 1892; 1916; 1927). The guru's 'general philosophy appeared to be that of the Siddhantic system' (1892: 187), that is, South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta, a form of Śaiva religion that had acquired a strong devotional flavour from the Tamil saints and mystics. Carpenter was introduced to the philosophy and was told stories about Ramaswamy's teacher 'Tilleináthan Swámy', an ascetic who identified with the natural world:

> It was a common and apparently instinctive practice with him to speak of the great operations of Nature, the thunder, the wind, the shining of the sun, etc., in the first person, 'I'—the identification with, or non-differentiation from, the universe (which is the most important of esoteric doctrines) being in his case complete. (1892: 145)

Carpenter relates that 'non-differentiation' from others and nature was a constant theme of Ramaswamy's discourse, a theme that must have chimed with Carpenter's long-standing thoughts on the unity of nature and fed into his subsequent theorizing about cosmic consciousness. As we shall see, subject–object nonduality was to become central to Carpenter's three-stage evolutionary theory of consciousness. From Ramaswamy, Carpenter also learnt that non-differentiation can be realized through two kinds of practices, one aimed at the suppression of thought, the other at the subjection of desire. Carpenter appreciated the utility of both practices, recognizing that petty thoughts and desires keep the self locked within narrow confines, but he showed some ambivalence towards the second. In *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta*, he gave more attention to the suppression of thought, and Ramaswamy felt that he should also make clear that spiritual attainment is extremely difficult

without absence of desire.[5] Desire had a valued place in Carpenter's outlook, in his personal life and also in his theorizing, as the evolutionary force that urges personal and social transformation. Carpenter supposed that if ascetic Will is the great path in the East, then Love is the great path in the West, but he came to feel that the inward-looking East and the outward-acting West could be harmonized to overcome each other's excesses.

Carpenter's evolutionary thought ranged from the early ideas expressed in *Civilisation* (1889) through to *The Drama of Love and Death* (1912) and *Pagan and Christian Creeds* (1920), but the three-stage scheme is explained most fully in *The Art of Creation* (1904). In *Civilisation*, the scheme is applied largely to social evolution, taking the form of a developmental framework for criticism of contemporary society: 'civilisation' is the unsatisfactory intermediate phase between a primitive stage of relative 'ease and contentment' in nature and a future stage of simple living and unity with nature. Carpenter's stage theory of society drew some inspiration from Lewis Morgan's anthropological study *Ancient Society* (1877) and Friedrich Engels's *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (*Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats*, 1884), itself inspired by Morgan's work. Carpenter's theory can be placed in what has been called the 'Marxist group' of Golden Age stories (Geoghegan 1991: 202–7), progressive reworkings of the ancient myth of decline that look forward to a new social order that will reflect but also surpass primitive communism. If not evidence of an actual prehistoric paradise, the widespread traditions of a Golden Age suggested to Carpenter that souls carry some memory of a more wholesome 'state of being' (1889: 11; see also 1904*a*: 194; 1920: 137–53). The break from nature, exacerbated by 'Property' and 'Government', brings all the ills of civilization—physical enfeeblement, diseases, degradation of sex, oppression of women, greed, conflict, excessive mental abstraction, and the rest. But ultimately the fall from wholeness into division is necessary, for it will lead to a more perfect unity that only the painful journey through self-consciousness can bring. 'Sin' is really separation, and separation is ultimately productive. Here Carpenter shows his affiliation with

[5] See letter from Arunachalam to Carpenter dated 17 September 1893, in Carpenter (1927: 53). Ramaswamy made the point shortly before he died in July 1893 from an illness ('Kurunegala fever') contracted during his time with Carpenter and Arunachalam in Ceylon. On Carpenter's 'Orientalism' and his early contacts with Indian religion, see Bakshi (1990).

Romanticism, in this case with the Romantic developmental model that describes a dialectical progression from unity through division to higher integration, a model also evident in the stage theorizing of Gershom Scholem and Erich Neumann that we shall come across in later chapters. It was this 'Romantic spiral' or 'circuitous journey' that M. H. Abrams (1973) identified as a key characteristic of Romanticism, interpreting it as a secular transformation of the biblical theme of fall and renovation. The spiral path, applied to the histories of the race and the individual, added tragic depth to Enlightenment conceptions of progress by giving alienation, suffering, and crisis a pivotal role in the upward movement. Friedrich Schiller gave expression to the dialectic in his *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1795), which describes a three-stage movement that is both outer and inner, socio-political and psychological, a progression from the 'physical state' to the 'moral state' via an intermediary 'aesthetic state'.[6] Unconscious unity with nature gives way to the social and intellectual fragmentations of the culture stage, but the fall is ultimately beneficial, making possible a future state of mature and conscious unity. Schiller's treatment here is rather abstract, but more dramatic or personal depictions of the spiral are to be found in the works of Hölderlin, Novalis, Blake, Wordsworth, and many others.

In *The Art of Creation*, Carpenter shifted the emphasis from the social to the psychological and philosophical. From his adventure in the East, he had gained a deepened appreciation of the significance of the subject–object duality in human thought, and it became central to his understanding of the stages. Whereas the first stage of Simple Consciousness is 'embedded in the great living intelligent whole (of the world)', as evidenced by the intuitive abilities of animals and primitive folk (1904*a*: 47), the intermediate stage of Self Consciousness brings alienation from nature and the true self through the crystallization of the illusory subject–object separation in human thought. Cosmic Consciousness marks a return to unity, but whereas Simple Consciousness was 'inchoate', Cosmic Consciousness is a state of perfect knowledge. Although subject and

[6] See Abrams (1973: 199–217) and Kirschner (1996: 166–9). Kirschner points out that the 'Romantic spiral' is itself indebted to mysticism through the Romantic revival and adaptation of Böhme's mystical theosophy. She raises the 'spiral' to draw parallels between Romanticism and post-Freudian psychoanalysis. Historically and conceptually, closer connections can be made between Romanticism and Jung's analytical psychology.

object are one in the first stage, they are not *known* as one, for the path of separation has yet to be traversed. The second stage is therefore crucial: it brings 'us to the edge of the third stage, and within sight, as it were, of the essential facts of the universe; and its value, in that respect alone, is immense' (1904*a*: 53). The stage of illusory separation, with self cut off from the world in thought, leads to 'a stage of full, vastly-extended knowledge connected with the (restored) sense of union between the ego and object' (1904*a*: 63). The world was never really broken up, and the self was never really excluded from it: we come again to our home 'from which we are never really separated' (1904*a*: 194). The fracture was cognitive, not ontological, consisting of delusive thinking, not fragmented being. But in Cosmic Consciousness, the subject comes to know itself united with its object, attains to the universal Self, and finds the entire universe in cosmic consciousness, with each part tied to the whole through infinite interrelations:

> All things, and the whole universe of space and time, really exist and *are* in this third state; a state where every object (or portion of the whole) is united to every other object (or portion) by infinite threads of relation—such infinitude of relations constituting the universal consciousness as embodied in that object. (1904*a*: 60)

Integration with the universal consciousness brings several benefits: Love and Sympathy (the realization of unity with others), Faith, Courage, and Confidence (universal life has nothing to fear), and Extension (endless life, power, knowledge). This constitutes Carpenter's explanation of the experiential features. They follow from the characteristics of the cosmic consciousness itself, with its loving unity of selves, unquenchable life, unlimited power, and all-encompassing knowledge. Pre-civilization man possessed them in an almost unconscious way; civilized man is largely alienated from them; post-civilization man will know them fully and consciously.

In Carpenter's *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, the spiral scheme becomes the framework for a developmental theory of religion, building on ideas already expressed in *Civilisation*. If religion is the sense of ties that bind self and world, then religion in the age of Simple Consciousness developed into a totemism that expressed natural and tribal solidarity. With the rise of Self Consciousness, religion came to be centred around supernatural powers conceived as distinct from oneself, and feared, placated, worshipped, ceremonialized, institutionalized. Carpenter is not dogmatic about the form

that religion will take when Cosmic Consciousness is in the ascendant, but it will have at its centre the mystical recognition of non-differentiation of self and other. Morality based on empty taboos will fade; the sense of kinship with animals will return, and kinship between races will grow; no longer degraded and despised, sex and the body will be held sacred.

With its debts to Romanticism and Hindu nondualism, Carpenter's spiral path to cosmic consciousness differs significantly from Bucke's scientific, rectilinear way. Bucke's Simple Consciousness, consisting of primitive percepts and recepts, is poles apart from the complex, associative combination that is Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness. In contrast, Carpenter's Simple Consciousness is closely akin to Cosmic Consciousness and prefigures it, for both depend on a non-differentiation of knower and known. For Bucke, cosmic consciousness is a faculty built up through long ages of mental evolution and is emergent in only the most advanced human specimens; for Carpenter, it is a consciousness liberated from concealment, a subliminal consciousness of cosmic extent temporarily obscured in the present evolutionary stage but theoretically available to anyone through the rehabilitation of the 'stupid old Body' and the 'wandering lunatic Mind' (1926: 484–7). Bucke's Cosmic Consciousness is a psychological faculty that apprehends the unity *of* the universe; Carpenter's Cosmic Consciousness is the experiential state of non-differentiation characterized by unity *with* other selves and the world.

Bucke and Carpenter had been in communication about cosmic consciousness, particularly in the early 1890s after Carpenter's trip to Ceylon,[7] but the two clearly had rather different understandings of it, perhaps without realizing how far they diverged. The differences extended to their neurological speculations, Bucke again taking the straight path and Carpenter following the spiral one. Bucke's early gropings towards a theory of higher mental evolution found expression in *Man's Moral Nature* (1879). Here he distinguished between the cerebro-spinal and great sympathetic nervous systems, associating the former with the intellect and making the latter the

[7] Weir (1995) observes that the exchange on cosmic consciousness was most intense between 1891 and 1893, that is, in the wake of Carpenter's trip to Ceylon and encounter with the guru. Weir argues that Carpenter introduced Bucke to the term 'cosmic consciousness' and stimulated Bucke to write on the topic. Carpenter refers to a 'cosmical consciousness' (also 'cosmical man', 'cosmic self') in his essay 'Civilisation' (1889: 44).

neurological basis of the moral nature, which, he supposed, is compounded from two basic pairs, love and hate, and faith and fear. Emotion is rooted in the body, an idea expressed less idiosyncratically in the famous James–Lange theory of emotion. But Bucke's crucial idea was an evolutionary one: given the biological basis of the moral nature, it seemed to follow, in his optimistic opinion, that evolution of the sympathetic system by natural selection would inevitably bring evolution of the moral nature, a process aided by social, cultural, and religious influences. In Bucke's rosy vision, faith and love would eventually triumph over fear and hate, and the moral nature would thereby come into accord with the true nature of the universe (see Armour and Trott 1981: 364–71; Shortt 1986: 78–93; May 1993: 9–12). Indeed, the growth towards love and faith that Bucke detected in human history seemed to provide evidence of the positive nature of the universe, for the world had shown itself to be the kind of place in which moral progress occurs. This early emphasis on the evolution of the moral nature was not carried over into *Cosmic Consciousness*, which has sensory-intellectual evolution as its centrepiece, building on Romanes's percept–recept–concept scheme. However, the legacy of the earlier work is present in Bucke's unflagging evolutionary optimism, in his depiction of the cosmic sense as highly moral, and in his belief that the emergence of the cosmic sense depends not only on the evolution of the intellect (cerebro-spinal) but also on the combination of the intellectual elements with the moral (sympathetic) elements.

Carpenter had read *Man's Moral Nature* and was appreciative of it, but in *The Art of Creation* he updated the neurology, incorporated it within his spiral scheme of fall and renovation, and shifted the focus from the duality of intellect and moral nature to a duality of conscious mind and subconscious mind. According to Carpenter, the conscious mind, represented biologically by the forebrain, has dominated the second stage of evolution at the expense of inherited, subconscious thought and habit, represented by the sympathetic nervous system, hindbrain, and spinal system. The conflict between conscious and subconscious mind, between 'mind' and 'body', brought about by humankind's rapid intellectual development and the dominance of self-consciousness during the second stage, is surmounted in cosmic consciousness, and balance is restored to the nervous system (1904*a*: 97–102).[8]

[8] See also Carpenter's 'Note on the Great Sympathetic' included in *The Art of Creation* from the second edition (1907: 113–17) onwards.

The neurologically embodied subconscious mind with which the modern conscious mind has come into conflict is an inheritance accumulated and passed down through countless generations, a race-consciousness intermediate between cosmic consciousness and individual consciousness. The theory was presented in the *Hibbert Journal* article 'The gods as embodiments of the race-memory' (1904*b*) and in *The Art of Creation*. It updates the Platonic philosophy of Forms with biological notions of inherited race-memory to give a psychological explanation of the gods of mythology and several other phenomena too, including visionary religious experiences, primitive dream-contents, the irruption of thoughts and feelings at puberty, and the special fascination that scenes or persons sometimes exert, including romantic allurements. These phenomena stem from the race-life, the inherited Ideas that lie dormant in each person until they are stirred, sometimes by an outer stimulus on which they are projected. The Ideas—inner essences that are manifested in a multiplicity of outer forms—are composited over long ages of race-experience and embedded in the physiological centres of the body. They include the Male and the Female, the Father, Mother, and Child, the Hero, the Saint, Deities and Devils, and Beauty and Duty. The body is, in effect, an assembly of temples, each with a presiding deity. Ultimately, the Ideas are 'powers' of the universal Self, but they evolve slowly through the race-life, constituting a level intermediate between the particularity and evanescence of individual consciousness and the universality and permanence of cosmic consciousness.

Carpenter had discussed the origins of the gods in *Angel's Wings* (1898), a work on aesthetics, but there the gods were comparatively external and consciously apprehended things, conventionalized and rather ossified expressions of human ideals passed down through art and religion, through 'tradition'. In *The Art of Creation*, the gods were now alive and kicking in the embodied subconscious, constituting emotional centres of the race that are passed down through biological inheritance. Carpenter's somatization of the gods between *Angel's Wings* and *The Art of Creation* may have owed something to religious conceptions of the body as a divine microcosm, such as the association of Hindu divinities with the energy centres of the subtle body, but its more immediate inspiration came from contemporary Western evolutionary theories in which Lamarckian inheritance of acquired characters had been extended into the psychological sphere through a physiology of organic memory. Carpenter was aware of

these scientific concepts of inherited memory, and he drew upon their literary expression in Thomas Hardy and Lafcadio Hearn.[9]

In some respects, Carpenter's theory of Ideas and the race-consciousness anticipates Jung's more psychologically developed theory of archetypes and the collective unconscious. However, Carpenter grounded his theory of Ideas in a *metaphysics* of the universal Self and therefore showed none of the epistemological circumspection that Jung was to exhibit in his usual depiction of the Self in purely psychological terms. For Jung, religious and mystical experiences are numinous manifestations of the archetypes. For Carpenter, powerful visionary religious experiences are likewise expressions of the Ideas, but in cosmic consciousness it is possible to go beyond the Ideas to the metaphysical Self at the heart of reality.[10] In principle, Carpenter's subordination of race-consciousness to cosmic consciousness should have precluded misappropriation of the theory by racists, an outcome that Carpenter would have deplored. Although neo-Lamarckian theories of inherited memory can be neutral in themselves, they are all too susceptible to racist perversion. Indeed, Carpenter's race-consciousness theory, like Jung's, may have had some appeal for racists (Delavenay 1971: 148–9; Nield 1990: 26),

[9] Carpenter's spiritualized neo-Lamarckianism is discussed by Eagleton (1968: 137–94) and Gershenowitz (1984), and his race-memory theory by Delavenay (1971: 145–53) and Bell (1981). Carpenter (1904*a*, *b*) quotes from Hearn's 'Beauty is Memory' (in *Exotics and Retrospectives*, 1898) and mentions his *Out of the East* (1895) and *Kokoro* (1896), in which a theory of race-memory figures prominently, applied to art, the irresistible pull of the feminine, ancestor-worship, and even the Buddhist doctrines of karma and rebirth, which are taken to anticipate modern evolutionary science. Herbert Spencer's evolutionary psychology was a major source of inspiration for Hearn's race-memory speculations.

[10] Carpenter's scheme, with its metaphysical Self, is reflected more closely in the model of the psyche developed by Roberto Assagioli (1888–1974), which, in addition to the collective unconscious and the archetypes, has a Higher Self and Superconscious that are directly accessible in mystical experience. As a young man, Assagioli had come into contact with Carpenter, and he most likely knew of Carpenter's ideas. The two met when Carpenter visited Florence in the spring of 1909, shortly after *The Art of Creation* was published in Italian (Carpenter 1916: 273–4; Ferrando 1931). At about this time, Assagioli and Jung also became acquainted, through their common interest in psychoanalysis. Carpenter mentions Assagioli's pamphlet *Il Subcosciente* (1911) in *The Drama of Love and Death* (1912: 110), on the subject of subpersonalities, and Assagioli was one of the three hundred or so signatories of the congratulatory address on Carpenter's seventieth birthday in 1914. When Assagioli (1934) outlined the currents of thought that converged in his system of psychosynthesis, he made no mention of Carpenter. However, in an expanded version of the article, Assagioli noted Bucke's *Cosmic Consciousness*, Ouspensky's *Tertium Organum*, and Winslow Hall's *Observed Illuminates* in connection with the Higher Self and the Superconscious ((1959) 1975: 14, 19). Carpenter has a significant presence in these books.

although they would have had to ignore the profoundly egalitarian framework of the theory. If Carpenter failed to liberate himself entirely from the prejudices of the age (Geoghegan 2003), he was probably more successful than many in this respect, and his fundamental drive was undoubtedly towards the recognition and promotion of equality. He explained that at the cosmic level of consciousness, differences of race and class fall away because all are found to be equals, and violence towards another is discovered to be violence towards oneself (1904*a*: 216 n. 1, 218). At the cosmic level, the race gods cease to fascinate, and deep empathy with other peoples and species arises. The evolved person, no longer tied to any one line of racial memory, now draws on far wider fields of consciousness, the consciousness of humanity, the consciousness of the whole (1904*a*: 193–4).

Some influence on Jung may be conjectured, for Carpenter's writings were, it seems, 'well-known in German medical circles', as Emile Delavenay asserts, adding speculatively that 'Freud and Jung must have known his books' (1971: 258–9). With his friend Havelock Ellis, Carpenter was a significant figure in British sex psychology. A translation of Carpenter's *Love's Coming-of-Age* (1896) was very popular in Germany, and Carpenter acquired an international reputation as a writer on homosexuality and the relations of the sexes. The German translation of *The Art of Creation* was published in 1908, shortly before Jung turned to mythology and took his first steps towards the theory of archetypes. The publisher was Eugen Diederichs Verlag, a house that brought out books on a variety of subjects that drew Jung's attention—religion, mysticism, philosophy, mythology, folklore, *völkisch* thought (Nield 1990: 31 n. 26; Mosse 1966: 52–63; Noll 1996: 86–8, 333 n. 36). Of course, Jung could well have arrived at the theory of archetypes independently, inspired by the same philosophical, literary, and scientific sources that Carpenter had brought together, including Plato, Kant, Schopenhauer, and the biological theories of inherited memory (Otis 1994; Shamdasani 2003: 182–91). The General Index to Jung's voluminous *Collected Works* has no entries at all for Carpenter (Forryan and Glover 1979), and the catalogue of Jung's personal library lists none of his books (C. G. Jung Bibliothek 1967). However, Jung clearly knew of Carpenter, if not the details of his theories, because his personal library contained *Three Modern Seers* (1910) by Mrs Havelock Ellis, on James Hinton, Nietzsche, and Carpenter, and *Edward Carpenter* (1915) by Edward Lewis. The latter mentions the race-consciousness theory but gives no details.

Carpenter's metaphysical Self was essential to his understanding of cosmic consciousness. When Carpenter encountered Walt Whitman's poetry in the late 1860s, he heard the song of a Self that is both individual and universal, a Self that brings all together irrespective of race or class. He heard the song again in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and soon became directly conscious of its source in his 1881 experience:

> I also immediately saw, or rather *felt*, that this region of self existing in me existed equally (though not always equally *consciously*) in others. In regard to it the mere diversities of temperament which ordinarily distinguish and divide people dropped away and became indifferent, and a field was opened in which all might meet, in which all were truly equal. Thus the two words which controlled my thought and expression at that time became Freedom and Equality. (1894: 49)

In this discovery of deep commonality, expressed at length in *Towards Democracy*, Carpenter found a solid basis for social concern and action, and he was hopeful that recognition of the close connection between selves would eventually lead to far-reaching moral, religious, scientific, economic, political, and social changes. When Carpenter gave philosophical expression to the idea in his ruminations on cosmic consciousness, he portrayed the universal Self in two ways that were not clearly distinguished. In one sense, Carpenter's universal Self is the knower united with the cosmic known. It is a 'universal' self because its object, the cosmos, is shared in common by all subjects. Carpenter explained the logic as follows:

> For if A knows his essential identity with all the objects a, b, c, &c.; and B also knows the same; then A and B know their essential identity with each other . . . (1904*a*: 68)

If my deeper Self is the cosmic whole and your deeper Self is the cosmic whole, then our deeper Selves are one and the same. But Carpenter also acknowledged that there must be a differentiating principle to account for the plurality of local selves. He was anxious to strike a balance between the general and the particular, so as not to perpetuate the common religious error of exalting the universal at the expense of the individual. Carpenter's thoughts on the unicity of the Self and the differentiating principle have venerable precedents in Western thought, going back to Neoaristotelian and Neoplatonic ideas that prompted debate over the unicity of the soul ('monopsychism') and the unicity of the intellect ('mononoism') (Merlan 1963). It is a feature of Leibniz's monadology, which has a plurality of equivalent wholes distinguished by different spatio-temporal

vantage points and different degrees of perceptual clarity. When Carpenter tried to explain how 'the great Self can also be millions of selves', he also drew upon a spatio-temporal principle of individuation: by manifesting at specific points of space and time, the Self is set on paths of individuality (1904*a*: 72–4). Why does the Self differentiate into countless local selves? In the cause of self-knowledge, suggested Carpenter. How does the differentiation come about? Our ordinary intellects cannot fathom it.

In this discussion of the Self and its local manifestations, Carpenter's second conception of the universal Self shows through. The Self identified with the cosmic known is a complex self because its object, the cosmos, is complex. But the Self that manifests or witnesses the cosmos is a simple self. Without qualities, it is the source of all qualities. This second understanding of the universal Self comes out most clearly in Carpenter's 'The Teaching of the Upanishads', based on public lectures first delivered in 1912 and 1913, and included in *Pagan and Christian Creeds* (1920). Drawing on the *Upaniṣads*, Carpenter discusses the witnessing self and explains why there can be only one:

> For if there were two or more such Witnesses, then we should be compelled to suppose them distinguished from one another by something, and that something could only be a difference of qualities, which would be contrary to our conclusion that such a Witness cannot be in bondage to any quality. (1920: 302–3)

Carpenter's argument for the unicity of the witnessing Self is comparable to the argument that Stace was to use for the unicity of pure consciousness (Chapter 5). Both utilize the principle of the identity of indiscernibles. Unlike Stace, however, Carpenter recognized not only the Self without qualities but also the knowing Self united with the cosmic known. Unlike Stace, he was well aware that cosmic consciousness brings a sense of unity *with* the world.

Liberal Christian Mysticism: The Immanent and Transcendent Ways

If the Romantic movement constitutes the historical background to the modern recognition of nature mysticism, additional encouragement came later in the nineteenth century with further immanentizing developments: pantheism and liberal Christianity. The interest in

'pantheism', an ambiguous term variously used in the period to denote the close relation, even identity, of God or the Absolute with the world or the individual, was partly inspired by Romanticism and the 'discovery' of Hinduism, but pantheism had contemporary social and political dimensions too, expressing a radical attitude to organized religion and its socio-political authority.[11] Immanentist tendencies were also evident within the Churches. Liberalizing currents in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Catholic and Protestant Christianity had sought to accommodate scientific and historical discoveries, welcoming them as opportunities for the enrichment of religious understanding. The liberal attitude not only encouraged sympathetic psychological and empirical study of religious experience as a response to naturalism, but also emphasized divine immanence, an attitude that encouraged the Christian recognition of nature mysticism. Some liberal thinkers hoped for a reconciliation between theology and science, including the challenging ideas of biological evolutionism, through incarnational and immanentist ideas.[12] Given this climate of world-affirming spirituality, which prevailed until the First World War and the post-war Neo-Orthodox theological reaction, it is not surprising that liberal Christian scholars engaged on the burgeoning study of mysticism,[13] notably Inge and Underhill, should identify immanent as well as transcendent types of mystical experiences. Inge and Underhill were Christians who believed that the world is the work and expression of God, and their readiness to acknowledge immanence and accord it equal status to transcendence exhibited the liberal Christian affirmation of the immanent aspect of divinity.

The world-affirming orientation is particularly pronounced in the thought of Inge and another liberal Christian writer on nature mysticism, Bishop John Edward Mercer (1857–1922), who shared

[11] See Jacyna (1981: 119–29) and Knight (2000). The literature on pantheism, from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, includes justificatory, condemnatory, and historical contributions, including moves to bring pantheism and Christianity together. Inge recognized the variability of the term 'pantheism' and distinguished several meanings (1899: 117–22).

[12] For example, the incarnational theology of the *Lux Mundi* school. Dewick's historical survey (1938) gives ready access to Christian immanentist literature of the period.

[13] Furse (1977: 134–44; 1978) notes several factors that contributed to the emergence of a sympathetic yet detached engagement with mysticism in the early twentieth century: the rise of psychology as an empirical science; modernist concerns; interest in the history of mysticism; the search for an essence of religion; philosophical interest. See also Greene (1990: 41).

a distaste for purely world-transcending mysticisms. Indeed, Mercer's *Nature Mysticism* was written in conscious opposition to the 'orthodox' mysticism of communion with a 'supersensuous, superrational, and unconditional Absolute' (1913: 7–14). However, Christian thinkers, careful to distinguish their positions from outright pantheism, required that the immanent path be balanced by the transcendent path. Immanental mysticism could be dangerous if unbalanced. The liberalizing trend in the study of mysticism also showed in a willingness to seek inspiration from outside a narrow Christianity. Inge drew on Neoplatonic metaphysics, and, like Mercer, he showed a keen interest in the sciences of the day. Underhill was attracted to Bergson's philosophy, although her interest declined after the First World War.

It is well to acknowledge the contribution of Christian thinkers to the recognition, study, and promotion of the extrovertive type. William Parsons (1999: 140–5), drawing on Zaehner's black-and-white distinction between natural and religious mysticism, has interpreted extrovertive experience as secular 'unchurched mysticism' attractive to proponents who fashion 'a quasi-religious and psychological theory of mind'. Although certainly applicable to some important transpersonal theorists, including Bucke, Carpenter, Romain Rolland (Parson's focus of research), and Aldous Huxley, the thesis does not take into account the attractions of nature mysticism to liberal 'churched' proponents, whose modernism was worked out within Christianity. These Christian thinkers were responsible for the influential twofold typology in which extrovertive experience secured an enduring place. In contrast, early secular investigators of mysticism, such as Bucke, Carpenter, and William James, showed little or no interest in typological distinctions.

BACK TO PLOTINUS: INGE'S 'OBJECTIVE MYSTICISM'

William Ralph Inge, Dean of St Paul's from 1911 to 1934, was a leading churchman who achieved renown through his sermons, books, and journalistic writings.[14] Inge had great hopes for mysticism as a source of living spirituality that could challenge petrified religion and reinvigorate faith weakened by biblical criticism and scientific discoveries. Amongst modern scholars of mysticism, Inge has been the most Platonic: his Christian Platonism combines a

[14] On Inge and his thought, see Fox (1960), Helm (1962), and Crook (1991).

Christian notion of presence with the Neoplatonic concept of the intelligible universe.

Platonism does indeed lend itself to such a use. In Plato's philosophy, and in mystical philosophies influenced by Plato, the objects of sensory experience are said to participate in the Forms that are their exemplars. Beautiful things, for instance, derive their attractiveness from the Form of Beauty. Hence, sensory experiences reflect spiritual realities, and, in cases of outstanding beauty, the senses can lead the beholder to an apprehension of the intelligible reality behind the sensory world. For Platonically inclined theorists, beautiful sunlit scenes are facilitative circumstances because they bring intimations and even stir reminiscences of beautiful illuminated reality. Metaphysics in the Platonic vein anchors spiritual reality beyond the sensory world but does not deprive the sensory world of a close connection with its spiritual background. The mystic passes beyond the senses, sometimes with the aid of the senses, and the goal, if only a penultimate goal, is life in the intelligible cosmos, vision of the archetypal ideas in the divine mind (*visio mundi archetypi*), rather than vision of the natural world (*visio mundi*) (see Bell 1977). A Platonic or Neoplatonic explanation of extrovertive mystical experience may contend that the subject has experienced the natural world in its participatory relationship with the intelligible realities that undergird it, as Inge supposed, or has experienced the natural world in its archetypal form, as it exists in the mind of God. For instance, Reiner Schürmann (1978: 11–13) explains that Meister Eckhart was inspired by a 'Platonist Albertinism' abroad in fourteenth-century Germany, according to which 'creatures preexist from all eternity in God, by their ideal being'. Before a human being comes to be born, there is no sensory experience and everything is held in ideal form. When birth occurs, the essential, ideational presence of all things comes to be obscured by the reception of sensory images in the intellect, but apprehension of the ideas can be reattained by detaching the intellect from the images.[15] The intellect thereby becomes all things again, the totality of the ideas. Schürmann claims that Eckhart took the philosophy a step further, by allowing the vision of the 'totality of the forms in the ground of the mind' to be an actuality in the present, not just in the life to come

[15] Schürmann supposes that Eckhart's reframing of the intellect as the receptor of the images as well as the seat of the ideas represents a Platonism modified by Aristotelianism (1978: 34–8).

(1978: 146–8). More generally, Neoaristotelian philosophy combines with Platonism to give a role to an exalted divine emanation, the Active Intellect (see Merlan 1963). The assimilation of the human intellect to the divine Intellect may then be associated with visions of the cosmos, as in the fictional story of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān by Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 1185–6). Ḥayy's first mystical glimpse is inspired by contemplation of the presence of God in nature.[16]

The complexities and obscurities of this rich tradition of ideas in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic religious philosophies do not enter Inge's fairly simple use of Neoplatonism, which stays with the basic idea of the Plotinian intelligible realm and its presence in the sensory. In *Christian Mysticism*, Inge gave a 'presence' definition of mysticism:

> Religious Mysticism may be defined as the attempt to realise the presence of the living God in the soul and in nature, or, more generally, as the attempt to realise, in thought and feeling, the immanence of the temporal in the eternal, and of the eternal in the temporal. (1899: 5)

The definition reflects two characteristic features of Inge's thought, liberal Protestantism and Christian Platonism. Both are detectable in his willingness to find the divine presence in nature as well as in the soul. Inge's particular brand of liberalism was Anglican 'Modernism', although Inge preferred to understand modernism broadly, as inclusive of earlier periods in which Christianity had assimilated knowledge from outside. Indeed, Inge was a pioneering Plotinian scholar and his treatment of mysticism drew heavily on Neoplatonic themes. The interpenetration of the temporal and eternal in the second part of Inge's definition reflects the Plotinian orientation. Inge gives pride of place to the intelligible universe and extols the virtues of reason in the mystical life, agreeing with the Cambridge Platonists that reason is a spiritual faculty: religion 'must not be a matter of feeling only' (1899: 19–21). Inge argued that Christian Platonism is a third, legitimate form of Christianity, alongside Catholicism and Protestantism.

Inge's recognition of divine presence in nature and the soul is developed into a classification of two types of higher mysticism, an analysis that was to reverberate through twentieth-century classificatory efforts. According to Inge, there are two 'movements' in the

[16] For Ḥayy's cosmic vision, which is both spatial (celestial spheres and sublunar realm) and temporal (creation to revelation), see Goodman (1972: 152–4).

higher stages of spiritual experience. *Objective mysticism* looks out to the world and fellow humankind to learn of God, whilst *subjective* or *introspective mysticism* sinks inwards to seek communion with God (1899: 26–8). The former traces the divine footprints in Nature, finding heaven reflected in earthly beauty, whilst the latter is 'impatient of intermediaries', striving to leave behind all sensuous forms that obscure God. According to Inge, the two movements must work together, but in practice one is usually emphasized at the expense of the other. As key figures in the development of objective mysticism, Inge mentions Valentine Weigel, Jakob Böhme, William Law, and the Cambridge Platonists, for whom the world is a house or temple of God. But Inge supposes that even the Cambridge Platonists, as intellectual scholars, 'undervalued the religious lessons of Nature' (1899: 300). It is the poets who express the vision of divine nature most fully, and Wordsworth is the great representative.

Inge considers animism to be a valid, early stage of objective mysticism, but one that is subject to degeneration into 'fetishism' and a fixation on miracles, supernatural phenomena, and magic (1899: 262–3). The inward turn of subjective mysticism has dangers too: it can result in world-renouncing spirituality or the abnegation of reason in the pursuit of the otherworldly. A related danger is metaphysical 'abstraction', the idea of a God without attributes at the summit of the mystical path. By combining the objective and subjective movements, Inge supposes that the dangers of each can be avoided. McGinn (1992: 273) suggests that Inge's *Christian Mysticism* was partly intended to counter preoccupation with negative theology and the miraculous that Inge observed in Roman Catholic treatments of mysticism. In attempting to balance the two ways, Inge does indeed appear to respond to what he considers to be the 'degradation' of Catholic mysticism since the Reformation (1899: 264–5). He supposes that subjective mysticism became overly abstract and world-denying, and that objective mysticism degenerated into fascination with supernatural phenomena.

Inge's explanation of extrovertive experience rests on a Christian Platonism in which the divisions between the levels of Neoplatonic ontology are softened. First, the transcendence and ineffability of the One are minimized, reflecting Inge's distaste for negative theology. There is some excuse for negative theology, to purify the self through negation, but its results have been counter-productive, leading to world-renouncing attitudes and to the loss of symbols and a living model in Christ. Second, Inge stresses the continuity of

the sensible and intelligible worlds in opposition to popularized, pseudo-Platonic dualism of two distinct worlds, one eternal and intelligible, the other transitory and sensible, a dualism that he sees further exaggerated by negative theology into a dualism of the abstract One and a less-than-real visible world. The vital mid-part of the system, the intelligible reality, is left out, usurped by an abstract, bare Unity that cannot be linked with the world it is supposed to create. Mysticism that stresses union with the Godhead or the abstract One is liable to overlook the intermediary intelligible universe: 'The whole rich content of the Neoplatonic heaven, the world "Yonder," the realm of the eternal values, thus falls out' (1933: 218).

Inge's intelligible realm, continuous with the sensible realm and not divorced from the One, is the true goal of the mystic, the true home of man, and it is the presence in nature discovered by nature mystics. Inge's description of the intelligible world, which he adapts from Plotinus, is elaborated in detail in his Gifford Lectures of 1917–18, published as *The Philosophy of Plotinus* (1918). It is summarized in his popular account of cosmology and religion *God and the Astronomers* (1933) and sketched again in the late work *Mysticism in Religion* (1947). Inge prefers to call the intelligible world the 'spiritual world' (1918: ii. 38). It is the 'only completely real world', and our citizenship is in this eternal heaven (1933: 260). It is 'the rich and bright kingdom of real existence' to which souls aspire (1947: 160). Here individuals know one another perfectly, united in the permanent life of an Eternal Now. They retain their individuality but are not separate, other than through differences in nature: it is distinction without division. There is a 'complete compenetration', with the whole present in each part. Subject and object correspond perfectly, without annihilating each other: it is a unity-in-duality of subject and object, and a trinity-in-unity of Spirit (*nous*), Spiritual Perception (*noesis*), and the Spiritual World (*noeta*). The spiritual world is the world of values, which for Inge is a unity of Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. The spiritual world is spaceless and timeless, but it is not to be separated from the temporal, visible world to produce an irreconcilable dualism. Inge quotes a Plotinian phrase to stress their connection: 'all things Yonder are also Here' (1899: 258; 1933: 262).

In summary, Inge supposes that objective mystical experience brings an apprehension of the presence of the spiritual world in the sensory realm. It is also an apprehension of the presence of God

because the spiritual world is the unified contents of the divine mind. In effect, the mystic discovers the mind of God present in the sensory realm of nature. Inge's presence explanation, like other explanations, can be evaluated on three counts: (1) the background system or theory on which the explanation draws, (2) the categorization and characterization of the experiences, which may depend in part on the explanation, and (3) the explanation itself, including its ability to account for circumstances and experiential characteristics. On the first count, Inge's efforts are praiseworthy: he builds on Plotinian philosophy, a system that not only attends to the transcendence–immanence distinction in a sophisticated manner but also contains ideas well suited to the discussion of mystical phenomenology, which is no surprise given Plotinus' mystical credentials. Inge devotes considerable effort to the explication of the philosophy, no mean achievement at a time when the study of Plotinian philosophy was embryonic. With regard to categorization, characterization, and explanation of features, Inge's efforts are not so impressive. His approach is theory-driven rather than data-driven: the twofold typology emerges from theological rather than empirical considerations, and Inge provides neither a phenomenology of objective mystical experience nor an explicit explanation of the characteristics. Furthermore, the inattention to empirical data limits Inge's appreciation of the variety of circumstances. Objective mysticism is 'nature mysticism' in the limited sense, mystical experience prompted by the beauty and order of nature.

Why should an encounter with the intelligible presence in the natural world bring deepened knowledge, more extensive perceptions, blissful feelings, altered experience of time, a sense of unity, and luminous phenomena? It is not difficult to see how Inge could have addressed the question. Presence theorists can explain experiential characteristics by pointing to the attributes of the spiritual presence. Inge's divine presence is the intelligible universe of Christian Platonism, the mind of God united with its contents, characterized by non-discursive intellect, subject–object unity, interpenetration of parts, luminosity, timelessness, life, goodness, love, beauty, and truth. Inge could therefore have argued that the nature mystic's experience becomes infused by these characteristics of the intelligible world. Extrovertive features reflect the universe as it exists in the divine mind, which is accessible to the soul at its higher level. Still, we would want to understand in detail how Inge's Christian Platonism allows the mystic to experience the intelligible in the

sensory, understood by Inge as a vision of the natural world (*visio mundi*), not as a vision of the intelligible cosmos itself (*visio mundi archetypi*).

FLIRTING WITH BERGSON: UNDERHILL'S 'ILLUMINATED VISION OF THE WORLD'

Evelyn Underhill was not a Christian Platonist, but like Inge, she was drawn to liberal Christianity, and her positive attitude towards nature mysticism reflects the liberal Christian affirmation of divine incarnation and immanence. Underhill's spiritual impulses were briefly channelled into occultism, but by 1907 mysticism had come to occupy her attention, and she was drawn to Catholic Modernism. With the papal suppression of Modernism in the same year, Underhill felt unable to join the Roman Catholic Church, and, by the early 1920s, she had returned to her Anglican roots (Greene 1988: 4–8). In the meantime, Underhill directed her energies to mysticism, and the first substantial fruits of her research were published in 1911.

In *Mysticism*, Underhill distinguished two ways in which the 'spiritual consciousness' of the mystic can develop, through union with the eternal and union with the temporal. The first is transcendent, a communion with God; the second is immanent, the discovery of God in the world. Like Inge, Underhill declared that the two ways should work together for best results: 'The full spiritual consciousness of the true mystic is developed not in one, but in two apparently opposite but really complementary directions' ((1930) 1993: 35). Underhill elaborated on the immanent way during an account of the stages of mystical development, which proceed from Conversion ('awakening' and 'purification'), through Illumination, to the mystical flowering of the Unitive Life. She believed that the initial awakening happens through one or other of the mystical ways, depending on the temperament of the individual, but not through the two together. She also believed that the immanent way belongs principally to the stage of Illumination but may sometimes occur in the Conversion stage as the experience that awakens spiritual life. Underhill supposed that the immanental discovery occurs to unlettered men who live close to nature and to those of poetic rather than contemplative temperament.

As the mystic becomes proficient, though not yet perfectly adjusted, the stage of Illumination dawns, and the 'illuminated vision of the world' reaches a higher stage of development. It is

one of three experiences that Underhill finds in the Illuminative stage, the others being the union experience of the inward way and psychical experience, such as visions, auditions, dialogues, and automatic writing. The illuminated vision has reached new heights: nature poet turns into a true mystic who can claim with Blake that 'the doors of perception are cleansed' and that 'everything appears to man as it is, infinite' ((1930) 1993: 240). It is a discovery of the One revealed in the Many, a vision that penetrates through the outer husks to the radiance, beauty, and reality shining in the meanest of things. It is Bucke's 'Cosmic Consciousness', seen in its full development in the visions of Jakob Böhme and George Fox into the heart of things, and in Blake's visions of the world of imagination. The self has become aware of a 'unity in separateness', 'a glorious reality shining through the phenomenal'. The world of Becoming is seen as a 'vast arena of the Divine creativity' and is revealed in its truth, beauty, and joy through the eyes of love. The walls that divide 'human and non-human life' disappear. Man is no longer a stranger in the world but has a deep, loving sympathy with all life:

> By that synthesis of love and will which is the secret of the heart, the mystic achieves a level of perception in which the whole world is seen and known in God, and God is seen and known in the whole world. ((1930) 1993: 264)

Underhill understood the illuminated vision in terms of divine presence, but in *Mysticism* she gave no systematic philosophy that could be used to explain the manner in which divinity is present in the world. Her treatment was poetic and devotional, and there was no attempt to develop her allusions to Christian and Neoplatonic ideas of 'presence'. Another philosophical strand in her thought that remained undeveloped was *vitalism*, 'the principle of a free spontaneous and creative life as the essence of Reality' ((1930) 1993: 27), which she associated particularly with Henri Bergson and Rudolf Eucken. In vitalism, Underhill found a new philosophical development that could do justice to the world of Becoming and shed light on mystical experience. In fact, Underhill's discussion constitutes an early application of Bergson's filtration theory of consciousness to mystical experience, a type of theory that Huxley was later to take up and which others had already applied to paranormal phenomena. In *Mysticism*, Underhill looked upon vitalism as only a partial account, for it fails to recognize the eternal, and the philosophy played no further role in the book, even though Bergson's ideas could have been usefully applied to illuminated vision of the world.

Underhill's enthusiasm for Bergson remained high. In 1912, after attending the philosopher's lectures in London, Underhill remarked that she was 'still drunk with Bergson', and she went on to write 'Bergson and the Mystics' (see Greene 1990: 42, 57). She once again applied Bergson's filtration theory to mystical experience and even put aside her earlier objection to vitalism by offering a Bergsonian explanation of the experience of eternity. In Bergson's philosophy, time is an experiential duration rather than a physical point-instant. Taking up the idea, Underhill supposed that duration expands for the mystic, taking in more of the rhythm of reality: 'So the great seer or prophet transcends the common time-span, and perceives events in a wide and comprehensive vision' ((1912) 1988: 56–7). To Underhill, it seemed that mystics, aware that consciousness can expand beyond its ordinary spatial and temporal limits, had anticipated the latest philosophy. Bergson, in turn, was appreciative of Underhill's work on mysticism (1935: 194 n. 2). However, her enthusiasm was not to last, and in the final, twelfth edition (1930) of *Mysticism*, she added a preface and a note that indicated her change of heart ((1930) 1993: vii–xi, 43). Now she was sympathetic towards philosophical and theological developments that emphasized the transcendence and independence of the spiritual reality, the 'otherness' of God. Otto, Karl Barth, neo-Thomist thought, and von Hügel are mentioned. The change reflected the widespread theological shift away from liberalism after the First World War. Underhill had distinguished between the transcendent and immanent in the 1911 edition, but now she wished to emphasize the distinctness of the transcendent reality to combat 'naturalistic monism', described as 'a shallow doctrine of immanence unbalanced by any adequate sense of transcendence' ((1930) 1993: viii). She thought that vitalism, the philosophy of a common, universal life, cannot provide the requisite transcendence and may promote an unbalanced notion of immanence.

It has often been observed that Underhill's understanding of the spiritual life underwent a transformation as her career progressed, shifting from concern with personal mystical growth in the early works to a concern with religious community in the later period (e.g. Horne 1983: 77–84; Greene 1988). Contributing to the change was the influence of the Catholic lay theologian Friedrich von Hügel (1852–1925), author of *The Mystical Element of Religion* (1908) and a supporter of Modernism during its crisis years. Von Hügel's theology of 'critical realism' distinguished firmly between God and

creation, but not so sharply that an incarnational presence in the Church and nature was excluded. Von Hügel's influence on Underhill was not purely theoretical: from 1921 he acted as Underhill's spiritual director and encouraged her to find balance in her spiritual strivings. Underhill's retreat from 'vitalism', and therefore from an explanation of extrovertive experience based on a contemporary mind–body theory, was not merely intellectual: it grew out of her struggles to find balance, a balance that was sought through an assertion of the transcendent in conjunction with a new emphasis on the divine incarnation in institutional religion and the communal life, rather than in nature.[17]

Like Inge's treatment, Underhill's explanatory approach is theory-driven and suffers from similar defects. The twofold typology derives more from a liberal Christian reading of the immanence–transcendence distinction than from analysis of experiential data. For the same reason, there is no systematic attempt at characterization, although Underhill is able to give love a place, reflecting her promotion of love as the key to mysticism in general: 'The business and method of Mysticism is Love' ((1930) 1993: 85–90). Underhill's theoretical framework is a vague Christian immanentism that lacks the Plotinian weight of Inge's thought. Her turn to a contemporary philosophical system had potential, and she deserves credit for recognizing the applicability of Bergsonian philosophy to mystical experience and for her imaginative attempt to make sense of the 'Eternal Now' of the mystics in terms of an expanded Bergsonian *durée*. However, she left the philosophy unintegrated with her theistic approach and eventually discarded it.

GOING BEYOND KANT: OTTO'S A PRIORI MYSTICAL KNOWLEDGE

The most celebrated early twentieth-century attempt to identify the essence of religion put experience at the heart of religion. In *The Idea of the Holy* (*Das Heilige*, 1917, trans. 1923), the German theologian and scholar of religion Rudolf Otto argued for the essential independence of religion from the Kantian trinity of reason, ethics, and aesthetics, all dependent on a priori categories. Religion is dependent on the category of the Holy, which is irreducible to the other

[17] See Johnson (1998) on the later development of Underhill's theology, which included a turn to Whiteheadian process philosophy to clarify the transcendence–immanence distinction.

three: stripped of its rational and ethical components, religion is left with the *numinous* at its core. Numinous feelings are a response to an unseen, divine reality, the presence of which inspires fear and attraction. Thus, Otto posits a spiritual reality, the presence of which is felt in numinous experience and which is most evident in the form of numinous experience that Otto singles out as mystical.[18] Otto investigated mystical experience in *Mysticism East and West* (*West-östliche Mystik*, 1926, trans. 1932), and identified two types, one of which includes unified perceptions of the world, the 'unifying vision' that I outlined in Chapter 2. The work is a comparative study of the Advaita philosopher Śaṅkara and the Christian mystical philosopher Meister Eckhart, and Otto's mystical types are set up to accommodate the different spiritual realities affirmed by each philosopher, Brahman and God respectively. Otto is therefore not exclusively concerned with understanding mysticism in a monotheistic tradition, and mystical presence is not tied to a specific conception of spiritual reality. The numinous reality can be viewed as a personal creator God, the impersonal ground of God (Godhead), or an impersonal Absolute.[19]

In Otto's estimation, both Śaṅkara and Eckhart express two mystical ways, the *outward* way of 'unifying vision' and the *inward* way of 'introspection'. Like Inge's 'introspective mysticism', the inward way is a withdrawal from the world into the depths of the self or soul. Here the mystic finds the Infinite, God, or Brahman. According to Otto, the secular developments of the inward way have been introspective psychology and concepts of inborn, a priori knowledge. To illustrate the inward way, Otto chooses a famous passage from Plotinus' *Enneads* (IV. 8. 1), construing it as a description of the inward turn to union with the Godhead. The choice is unfortunate because the passage describes an inward turn to the intelligible universe, not union with the supreme principle. Otto fails to realize that the inward way may lead to spiritual realities other than the metaphysical ultimate, an oversight that Inge in particular would have deplored. The multi-storeyed Neoplatonic

[18] The relationship between the 'numinous' and the 'mystical' in Otto's thought has been debated. They have been treated as distinct experiential categories (e.g. Smart 1958), but the mystical has also been made a sub-category of the numinous (Almond 1982; Schlamm 1991).

[19] Almond (1982: 92–113) argues that Otto was not committed to a theistic conception of the numinous reality, which can be treated as theistic, trans-theistic, or non-theistic.

universe is compressed into two floors, the sensory world and the spiritual reality, with the intelligible realm omitted. For Plotinus, the mystic turns away from the senses and meets the world as it exists in the divine intellect, transfigured and unified by a qualified identity. That the mind should rise to an unmediated, interior vision of the cosmos as it exists in the divine mind is inconceivable in Otto's scheme, rooted as it is in Kantian epistemology, which sets formidable limits on human knowledge. Otto departs from pure Kantianism by allowing experiential knowledge of reality, but not so far as to embrace an unmediated Neoplatonic *noesis*.

Alluding to Karl Joël's ideas (1903) on the ancient Greek origin of physical concepts in 'the spirit of mysticism', Otto supposes that it was the intuition of unity in the sensory multiplicity that initiated the early speculative sciences. The unifying vision is the mystical source and counterpart of intellectual notions of the law-governed universe and the world as a system of interacting parts, mechanical or organismic ((1932) 1987: 47). Otto devotes two chapters to the unifying vision because he believes that it has been neglected by previous scholars of Eckhartian and Indian mysticism. Like Inge and Underhill, he supposes that the two mystical ways can occur separately but also fuse together. The inward way was more important for Śaṅkara and Eckhart, but they knew the outward way too.

Does the outward way, in its final stage, converge with the inward way (Figure 4.1)? Otto is under the impression that scholars will regard the two as 'absolutely unrelated experiences' because they have been reached in different ways, whilst mystics will make no distinction. The mystic not only experiences similarities, such as subject–object unity and transcendence of space and time, but also feels a dependence on interior knowledge in both cases ((1932) 1987: 249–56).

The notion of interior knowledge is crucial to Otto's understanding. It reflects the revised Kantian framework adapted from the philosopher Jakob Fries (1773–1843) that underpins Otto's approach to religion and religious experience.[20] From Fries, Otto takes the notion of an intrinsic, a priori knowledge of the unity of reality, knowledge not derived from sense-perception. In the unifying vision, the senses provide the raw material, but the intimation

[20] On the Kantian and Friesian background to Otto's thought, see for instance Moore (1938: 77–82), Bastow (1976), Almond (1982; 1983; 1984), and Otto's own exposition of Kantian philosophy of religion (1931).

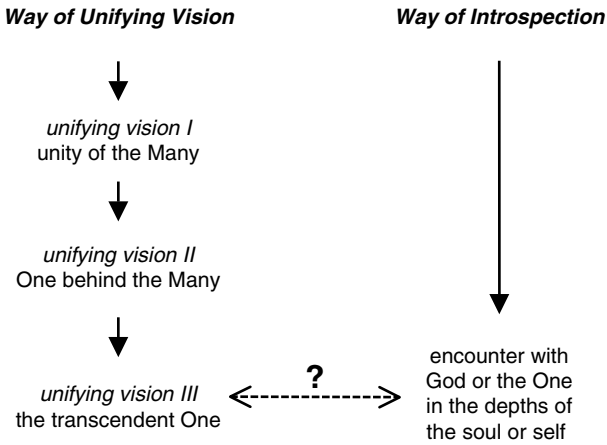

FIGURE 4.1 Otto's two ways: different or identical destinations?

(*Ahnung*) of oneness depends on a priori knowledge. The post-Kantian background is explicit in the appendixes to *Mysticism East and West*. Otto connects Fries's 'primordial knowledge of eternal unity and fulfilment' with the 'mystical intuition of Eckhart' ((1932) 1987: 240), and he even detects his own three-stage scheme of unifying vision in Schleiermacher's *On Religion*.

Otto's resources are Neoplatonic and post-Kantian: Plotinian and Eckhartian mystical philosophies inspire Otto's descriptive phenomenology and three-stage scheme of unifying vision, and the revised Kantianism supplies him with an explanation of how spiritual experience is possible. Kantian philosophy is not the most congenial environment in which to pursue a metaphysics of mystical experience, and the revised Kantianism, whilst allowing experience of spiritual reality, is unlikely to have much to say about the reality itself. In Otto's treatment, the reality that engenders mystical feelings remains shadowy: the mystic experiences an a priori knowledge of the unity of reality, not the unified reality itself.

Like Inge and Underhill, Otto is weak on the phenomenology of extrovertive experience because he relies on mystical philosophy rather than detailed, first-person accounts. He manages to identify several unities, but he should really say more about them, explaining in detail how the a priori knowledge relates to them: are there several kinds of a priori knowledge for the various stages of unity? How is a priori knowledge of spiritual reality possible? Also to be explained

are the altered temporality and luminous 'transfiguration' that Otto finds in first-stage unifying vision. They are suggested to Otto by his Neoplatonic sources, but his approach is post-Kantian and therefore a post-Kantian explanation is required. Otto does tackle altered temporality from a post-Kantian perspective ((1932) 1987: 67–8): for non-mystics, 'space and time are the conditions *a priori* of the real existence of objects and events', but mystics reach beyond the individuating, innate intuition of space and time (Kantian) to the innate knowledge of the unity of things (post-Kantian). Transformed temporality therefore goes hand in hand with the innate knowledge of unity. However, the post-Kantian framework offers no obvious explanation for the luminous transfiguration, and Otto has nothing to say on the matter.

Otto's identification of stages can make some sense of differences between extrovertive experiences, and for theistic theorists it can help to explain why some experiences bring no sense of divine presence. Many modern accounts make no reference at all to the presence of God. How could theistic-presence theorists explain the absence? They could argue that subjects fail to recognize the divine presence through a lack of training, or, adopting a stage theory, they could claim that the experiences were not fully developed, so that the presence of God was not properly revealed. Otto would be able to say that mystics who find no trace of God or the Absolute have not passed beyond first-stage unifying vision. They experience only the integrality and interconnectedness of the cosmos, and so they are led to atheistic, pantheistic, or agnostic views when they intellectualize their experiences. Mystics who reach the second stage will have insights into the dependence of the unified multiplicity on God or the Absolute.

Inge gave the most elaborate picture of the reality behind extrovertive experience, but the details of how the mind of God is present in nature and how the human mind apprehends the presence were not worked out. In her writing on nature mysticism, Underhill's conception of the presence of God was even less developed, and her originality lay in the Bergsonian suggestions that she eventually abandoned. Otto's post-Kantianism was the least forthcoming on the nature of the spiritual reality: his contribution was more epistemological, positing a priori knowledge of unity. As we shall now see, Stace showed no such caution: he was in no doubt that the spiritual reality is pure consciousness.

5
Empty your Mind
Uncovering Pure Consciousness

A variety of transpersonal realities can be invoked to explain extrovertive experiences. Carpenter supposed that mystics discover the universal mind or Self that contains the cosmos. Inge and Underhill believed that nature mystics discover the immanent aspect of God in creation. Otto, in his comparative study of Meister Eckhart and Śaṅkara, left the matter open, allowing the spiritual reality to be the personal creator God of theistic religion or the impersonal Absolute of monistic religion. Disillusioned with the Christian notion of God, W. T. Stace took up the latter alternative, understanding the impersonal One as a *pure consciousness* completely distinct from the natural world. Spiritual reality was shorn of its immanent aspect. By driving a wedge between spirit and nature, Stace turned extrovertive experience into an inferior type of mysticism and dispossessed the twofold mystical typology of its liberal Christian equipoise.

At first sight, pure consciousness seems to have little to do with extrovertive experience, for mystical experiences of the natural world are far from contentless. They are centred on the variegated multiplicity of the natural world, albeit a multiplicity transformed by unity, knowledge, light, and love. Nevertheless, Stace looked to pure consciousness in order to explain extrovertive experience, understanding it primarily as a *dual* state in which the mystical pure consciousness coexists side by side with ordinary, sensory-intellectual consciousness of the natural world. By examining the development of Stace's thought, I shall show that his dualistic understanding of extrovertive experience emerged out of a two-world metaphysics that maintained a sharp distinction between the realms of spirit and nature. Of all the theorists considered in the present study, I have devoted most attention to Stace. This is not simply because he was a leading figure in the twentieth-century study of mysticism. Nor is it because his explanation of extrovertive experience is particularly

outstanding and therefore deserves special attention. In fact, we shall see that his explanatory efforts were far from convincing. Rather, Stace is interesting because his treatment of mystical experience drew on a rich vein of metaphysical ideas that he explored during his career as a philosopher. The influence of these ideas on his mystical theorizing has been little appreciated because the ideas were not made explicit by Stace when he came to discuss mysticism. Stace's work therefore provides an ideal opportunity for the metaphysical type of analysis that I advocated in the Introduction, the description and evaluation of explicit or implicit metaphysical ideas in the works of mystics and scholars. Stace had an explicit metaphysics, but it was fairly well hidden in his treatment of mystical experience.

Pure consciousness is not just a theoretical idea derived from abstract philosophies of the Absolute. Some meditative practices, such as the continuous repetition of a word or sound, are said to bring about a state of consciousness empty of all contents, or at least a reflexive state in which consciousness has itself as its only object. The idea of pure consciousness has had considerable impact on the scholarly study of mystical experience. Stace made it central to his work, and, more recently, Robert Forman and others have raised pure consciousness to undermine the influential view that mystical experience is invariably conditioned by its contexts. It is alleged that pure consciousness, as a simple, contentless state, shows no signs of being shaped by religious and cultural influences. Like Stace, Forman has discussed extrovertive experience as a dual state that combines pure consciousness and ordinary consciousness, but he departs from Stace by allowing the two to be experienced in close relation. Spirit and nature come back together again after their Stacian separation. Forman supposes that in deeper extrovertive experiences the previously isolated pure consciousness is found to spread out unitively into the world, so that there is no longer a fundamental separation of the two. As we shall see, he departs from Stace in other important ways. Stace had looked upon extrovertive experience as an inferior, transient experience that occurs spontaneously, whereas Forman treats extrovertive experience as an advanced, permanent state that develops out of repeated acquaintance with pure consciousness. Forman therefore raises the intriguing possibility of an enduring extrovertive state attainable through long-term meditative practice.

Stace's Confusion of Explanations

Unusually sympathetic towards mysticism for a philosopher in the analytic tradition, Walter Terence Stace (1886–1967) wrote favourably on the subject at various times in his career. His major study *Mysticism and Philosophy*, first published in 1960, brought philosophical ideas and methods to bear on mystical experience: questions of typology, interpretation, objectivity, logic, language, and ethics were addressed, as well as the relation between mysticism and religion. A decade earlier, Stace had introduced the ineffable One into his philosophizing, finding evidence in mystical texts for an experiential origin of negative theology and of religion in general. In Stace's estimation, the origin was the experience of pure consciousness. Although Stace took this contentless, universal consciousness to be the essence of mystical experience, he was not a speculative metaphysician of the old school. Stace had rejected the anti-metaphysics and extreme empiricism of the logical positivists, but he insisted that metaphysics should be empirical, and his understanding of mystical experience developed out of and was coloured by an empirico-phenomenalist metaphysics, supplemented by Kantian and Hegelian borrowings. Stace has been accused of naivety for subscribing to an epistemology that allows direct contact with mystical reality and for maintaining a distinction between experience and interpretation. But only rarely has the philosophical basis of Stace's position been recognized, and the background to his extrovertive theorizing has not been adequately explored. Stace was a professional philosopher, and his understanding of mysticism was deeply informed by his philosophical commitments. These commitments were not made explicit in *Mysticism and Philosophy*, which is probably why they are generally overlooked.

Extrovertive experience was never more than a side issue for Stace, an impure step towards the pure introvertive experience that really interested him, and his casual attitude resulted in a confused account. It is easy to come away from Stace's *Mysticism and Philosophy* with very different understandings of extrovertive experience because Stace explains extrovertive unity in two ways (Figure 5.1), and only rarely does he show any recognition of the discrepancy. Stace's overriding approach, which I shall call 'Explanation-A', derives from his conception of mystical unity as pure consciousness. Extrovertive experience consists of sensory contents *plus* the pure consciousness

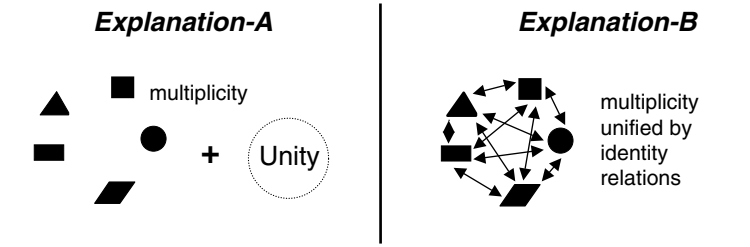

FIGURE 5.1 Stace's two explanations of extrovertive experience: (A) sensory multiplicity plus undifferentiated unity; (B) sensory multiplicity unified by a paradoxical identity of parts.

of introvertive mystical experience. In this explanation, it is only the pure consciousness that is mystical, not the sensory contents. It is roughly equivalent to Otto's second-stage unifying vision, although Stace neglects the source–product relation between the One and the Many recognized by Otto.

The second approach, 'Explanation-B', surfaces mainly when Stace discusses extrovertive examples. Here the sensory contents *are* inherently mystical (i.e. unitive) by virtue of a complete identity of parts that retains distinction, a paradoxical identity-in-difference. It is equivalent to Otto's first-stage unifying vision of paradoxical identity. In Otto's scheme, the two unities belong to different stages of unifying vision. In Stace's treatment, they become the basis of two contrasting explanations that are not properly distinguished.

EXTROVERTIVE UNITY AS PURE CONSCIOUSNESS

According to Explanation-A, extrovertive experience has two parts, undifferentiated consciousness (mystical) and sensory perception of the world (non-mystical). Introvertive experience has no perceptual-conceptual contents at all and consists of the undifferentiated unity alone. To understand extrovertive experience, it is enough to understand introvertive experience, for the two types are fundamentally similar through the core characteristic that makes them mystical, the 'Unity' or 'the One'. Stace believes that mystics in different religious traditions interpret the experiential One in different ways, as 'God', 'Brahman', 'nirvana', but the core experience is really the same. Both extrovertive and introvertive types are properly mystical because they

involve the core experience of Unity. However, it is more accurate to say that 'the experience *is* the One' than to talk of an experience '*of*' the One (1960: 15). For Stace, the language of union, or even better, the language of identity, is most appropriate. In Stace's analysis, the extrovertive mystic achieves unity or identity with the empty, undifferentiated One, *not* with the nature contents of the experience.

Echoing Otto's claim that mystics do not distinguish between the outward and inward ways, Stace is under the impression that mystics believe the extrovertive and introvertive unities are identical. Stace agrees with the mystics, but he does not rest his case on their opinions. He musters a logical argument to establish the identity of the two Ones:

> since both are empty of content, there is nothing to constitute a *principium individuationis* between them. (1961: 152)

By the principle of the identity of indiscernibles, there cannot be two or more things if there are no distinguishing characteristics (1967*b*: 51). Various objections to the argument have been raised,[1] but the most serious criticism concerns Stace's premise that the extrovertive unity is contentless. There may be some experiences that bring a sense of empty unity alongside ordinary perceptual contents, but many extrovertive accounts describe unities *with* or *of* diversified nature. Stace fails to acknowledge the range of extrovertive unities, such as the integral, identificatory, immersive, incorporative, interconnective, and source unities outlined in Chapter 2.

Stace's argument leads to the conclusion that there is in essence just one mystical experience, the apprehension of the One, which occurs in pure and impure forms. Stace has a twofold typology, but the types are identical in mystical content. This is probably why Stace believed it was possible to discuss the essentials of mysticism without looking closely at the extrovertive type. In writings other than *Mysticism and Philosophy*, he passes rapidly over extrovertive experience (1960) or omits it altogether (1967*b*, *c*). In Stace's view, the key to understanding mysticism of any kind is the One. Introvertive experience gives an uncluttered apprehension of the One, unlike extrovertive experience, which carries over sensations and concepts from ordinary experience. Extrovertive experience is assigned an intermediate position. It is 'a kind of halfway house to the introvertive' (1960: 16), 'a stepping stone' (1961: 49), 'a partly

[1] See, for instance, Smart (1962: 21–2), Wainwright (1970: 145–8; 1981: 154–6), and Almond (1982: 74–5).

realized tendency to unity' (1961: 132) in which the conditions for space, time, and multiplicity have not yet been obliterated. Extrovertive experience is a mixture:

> One part is physical and sensuous, and to this of course concepts apply.... This is not in itself mystical at all. The other part is the One. This alone is the mystical element, and this is unconceptualizable. (1961: 286)

Inferior as a mixed experience, extrovertive mysticism is also 'vastly less important... as regards practical influence on human life and history and as regards philosophical implications' (1961: 62–3). For Inge and Underhill, the outward and inward ways had been equally valid and mutually enriching; with Otto, the outward way became less important, at least for understanding Eckhart and Śaṅkara; with Stace, the demotion is generalized and deepened. Extrovertive experience is less important 'historically' because it has been much less widespread and influential, and it is less important 'spiritually' because it contains superfluous sensations and concepts (1960: 237). True, the experiences have a profound effect on subjects, but they are temporary and spontaneous, and cannot be induced or controlled (1961: 60). In contrast, introvertive experiences can be cultivated and can even become permanent, 'running concurrently with, and in some way fused and integrated with, the normal or common consciousness'. In Christian terminology, this is 'deification', 'spiritual marriage', or the 'unitive life' (1961: 61). Stace fails to appreciate that the permanent introvertive state, as he describes it, is equivalent to a permanent extrovertive state, for it brings together pure consciousness and normal sensory-intellectual consciousness.

What is the 'One'? Stace departs from Otto by adopting an explicit position on the One, for he believes that empirical evidence settles the issue. He frequently describes the One as an 'undifferentiated unity', which he says is equivalent to the claim that there are no 'particular existences' or 'distinctions' in it (1961: 86). The One is an experience, a 'positive experience which has no positive content', no content other than itself. Although empty, the One provokes emotional responses and other peripheral mystical characteristics, such as blessedness and peace. Just prior to his turn to apophatic mysticism at the end of the 1940s, Stace had not regarded the One as an experience of any sort, and he had rejected the idea as bad philosophy. He dismissed the negative Absolute of the *Upaniṣads* and Vedānta as 'unempirical' (1949*a*: 458), a damning criticism given Stace's conviction that good metaphysics is necessarily empirical. However, there was a turn-

around in Stace's attitude, via a transitional phase in 'Naturalism and Religion' (late 1949). The 'nothingness' of apophatic philosophy became central to his own interests. This was not because Stace had abandoned empiricism, but because he had come to understand the concept of the One as empirical, as derived from and referring to experience, in this case, to the experience of mystics.

Stace applies 'consciousness' terminology to the One. He comments that the phrase 'mystical consciousness' is preferable to 'mystical experience' and intimates that the word 'experience' is 'misleading in certain respects' (1960: 9). Stace may have been worried that 'experience' is more likely to imply subject–object differentiation, an 'experience of' rather than a 'consciousness' without an object. Stace supposes that when consciousness is emptied of all sensations, images, and concepts, a surprising development occurs. Instead of a fall into unconsciousness, there emerges a 'pure consciousness', pure because there is 'not the consciousness *of* any empirical content' (1961: 86). The lack of multiplicity is the reason why the pure consciousness is called the One. 'Consciousness' terminology helps Stace express the sharp distinction he wishes to draw between ordinary experience and the essence of mystical experience. He opposes *mystical consciousness* to familiar *sensory-intellectual consciousness*, which includes 'sensations, images, concepts, and their attendant desires, emotions, and volitions'. Lacking all these elements, mystical consciousness is beyond the grasp of language—hence the ineffability so often reported by mystics.

Stace is convinced that experience of the One is not intrinsically theistic or religious. He asks rhetorically, 'Now what is there that is religious about an undifferentiated unity?' (1960: 23). However, the unity-experience is readily absorbed into a religious framework, claims Stace, as happens when a mystic lives in a religious milieu. A mystic practising in a theistic context may assimilate the One to a credal notion of God and interpret the experience as 'union with God'. Although the One is not essentially religious, Stace is happy to call it 'spiritual'. By spiritual, Stace primarily means *supernatural*, having a reality beyond the person and the world, outside the system of nature and therefore beyond explication by natural laws. Stace argues that because the One is an empty consciousness, it must logically be the same consciousness for all. Common to all persons, the consciousness is not subjective. However, Stace cannot bring himself to call it 'objective' because it fails his phenomenalist test for objectivity, which is 'orderliness', defined as 'the constant

conjunction of repeatable items of experience' (1961: 143). Empty of contents, the experience cannot exhibit constant conjunction. He therefore calls it *transsubjective*. According to Stace, the realization of common identity in the One is the ultimate basis of morality, for the mystic discovers a fundamental bond and empathy with others. However, it is debatable whether the realization would lead to empathy and morality, or indeed to the intense love that is sometimes experienced. Identity through a featureless unity is a very bare kind of connection, giving very little common ground between persons.

METAPHYSICAL BACKGROUND

The above reading of Stace's principal understanding of extrovertive experience is supported by an examination of his mature metaphysical thought, which reflects the same dual structure. There is a parallel between the following:

1. Stace's division of extrovertive experience into two distinct components, one sensory-intellectual and the other mystical (early 1960s), and
2. Stace's metaphysical division of reality into the natural universe and a spiritual actuality beyond the universe (from early 1950s).

There are, however, tensions within Stace's thought, for his tendency to separate is balanced by a countertendency to unify. The overall picture is complex and contradictory, or, as Stace would have said, 'paradoxical'. Stace was a philosopher, and his approach to mysticism is properly understood only when the philosophical ideas he brought to the subject are taken into account. Stace blended together themes that are not entirely harmonious, and I shall suggest that the discord is apparent in his contradictory treatment of extrovertive unity. Stace's treatment owes philosophical debts to the following: (1) *empiricism* (concepts must correspond to experience); (2) *phenomenalism* (there is nothing beyond concepts and experience, actual or possible); (3) *naturalism* (the natural world is a closed system, with no place for the spiritual or supernatural); (4) the *Kantian transcendental subject* (a pure, unchangeable consciousness); (5) *Hegelian identity-in-difference* (differences are reconciled in a paradoxical identity). The first two form the background to Stace's understanding of mysticism in the early 1940s. The metaphysics at this stage is similar in some respects to Berkeleian idealism and Leibnizian monadology, although there are significant differ-

ences too. An empirico-phenomenalist philosophy of the 'given' is used to sketch a Christian theism in which God is a superperson amongst ordinary persons. For those who know Stace only through his later writings, it may be a surprise to discover his earlier theistic orientation, including his theistic understanding of mystical experience. An adolescent religious conversion had been sufficiently intense to incline Stace towards a career in the Anglican Church, but contact with philosophy at university and pressure from his family, which had notable military ancestry, led to different outcomes: a twenty-two-year career with the British Civil Service in Ceylon, including a spell as mayor of Colombo, and a life-long engagement with philosophy, first as a sideline, then in a professional capacity at Princeton University from 1932 (Smith 1968: 136–7).

By the late 1940s, Stace had lost his belief in a personal God. Writing shortly after the Second World War, Stace argued for a thoroughgoing naturalism. To avoid disaster, mankind must face the truth of a godless, non-spiritual world and take philosophical and educative steps to base morality on secular foundations. It is time to put away 'childish things and adolescent dreams', the 'Great Illusion' of 'a good, kindly, and purposeful universe' ((1948) 1967: 16–17). God had dropped out of Stace's worldview, leaving an indifferent, purposeless universe in which Man is unlikely to find much happiness, just a quiet content through facing the bleak truth with noble ideals. This is the mood that fills Stace's long poem *The Gate of Silence*, published in 1952 but written about four years earlier, during his period of disillusionment. The poem's central character, Stace's alter ego, is a preacher who has seen through the old dreams and illusions. Visited in turn by four holy men, he appreciates the beauty or depth of their stories but finds fault with each and is left unconvinced. The Christian's bountiful Creation and joyous Heaven are beautiful dreams that unfortunately do not tally with the way things really are. The unconditioned Self of the Upanishadic forest dweller is profound but absurd, and the Buddhist's vision of impermanence and suffering, although reflective of the way things are, is marred by the fantasy of rebirth. And the Platonist's ideal world is the ultimate fairy tale. It is time for Man to give up his beautiful dreams and confront the toil, pain, and mortality of life without the crutch of religion. The poem ends in despondency: the hope that Man can grow up and meet the perils that face him is perhaps 'the last and greatest of all illusions' (1952*a*: 49–50).

Shortly afterwards, under the impact of apophatic mysticism conveyed by Inge and Otto, Stace underwent his second spiritual conversion, not to his former Christianity, but to an austere mysticism of the One. Spirit returned to Stace's philosophy as the negative One of the mystics. In a brief transitional stage, Stace hung on to his naturalism by interpreting mystical experience as a purely subjective state of consciousness. Many of the themes developed in later years make an appearance here, but Stace had yet to separate the mystical consciousness from the natural universe, for he took the consciousness to be subjective and within the natural order, rather than transsubjective and outside the natural order. Stace argued that mystical experience cannot be as ineffable and non-rational as the mystics claim. If it were completely non-rational and non-conceptual, the symbolic language of religion would be impossible (1949*b*: 34). Stace attempted to resolve the conflict between religion and naturalistic science by arguing that naturalism is the whole story and by rejecting anything outside the natural. Mystical experience is an inner, subjective state of consciousness which becomes symbolized in religious language, but the subjectivity of the state does not detract from its value. The Buddha is described as a 'religious naturalist', and 'atheistic' Buddhism is considered the most philosophically astute of the religions. Stace believed he had shown that 'a subjectivist and naturalistic interpretation is perfectly compatible with the religious experience itself and with a deeply religious life' and that 'there is no necessary hostility between naturalism and religion' (1949*b*: 46).

Whilst continuing to maintain that religion and naturalistic science are not at odds with each other, Stace was soon to change his understanding of mystical consciousness by placing it beyond the world.[2] There is something beyond man and the world, a source of exalted feeling and empathy-based morality, and a way to 'bliss' and 'blessedness' (1953: 237). But the personal God of theistic religion had not made a comeback, and Christianity was readmitted as just one religion amongst many. The reality of the One had enabled Stace to accept the truth of religions with a 'qualified yes', and he embraced a two-world metaphysics of spirit and nature, of pure consciousness and the sensory-intellectual consciousness. The naturalism of the late 1940s was still in place for the universe but was

[2] For Stace's own assessment of the extent and limits of his change of view, see Stace (1952*b*: vi; 1953: 221; 1967*a*: vii).

now complemented by the spirituality of the One. Stace continued to find no evidence of purpose in the natural world and found none in the pure mystical consciousness either, but the One was recognized as a source of values and morals. Secular humanism had given way to the acceptance of a reality beyond the merely individual and to a belief in the potential of each person to be a meeting place of the two realms.

It is in this period that Kantian and Hegelian ideas are drafted in to flesh out Stace's new understanding. Kant is applauded for reconciling the domains of nature and spirit by *separating* them but is criticized for not appreciating that spirit is discoverable in mystical experience. Hegel is recognized for his notion of identity-in-difference, which brings the worlds of nature and spirit together in a paradoxical identity. The Kantian and Hegelian elements take on a more specific role in the early 1960s. The Kantian transcendental subject is added to Stace's empirical phenomenalism to explain the mystical One common to the introvertive and extrovertive types (Explanation-A), whilst Hegelian identity-in-difference supports a contrasting explanation of extrovertive unity (Explanation-B).

In summary, Stace first has the spiritual firmly located in the world as a personal God in a phenomenalist universe (1932; 1940). He then deletes the spiritual from existence, judging it illusory, and subscribes to thoroughgoing naturalism and secular humanism (1948; 1949*a*; 1952*a*). Next, he retrieves the spiritual, now as a subjective state of empty consciousness (1949*b*). Finally, he divests the spiritual of its subjectivity and places it beyond the world, yet in paradoxical identity with the world (from early 1950s). Despite these shifts, there is an underlying continuity in Stace's thought: his early empirico-phenomenalist leanings remain intact and are the route by which the One gains admission to his thought. They provide a framework in which pure consciousness can be firmly distinguished from sensory-intellectual consciousness and its interpretative impositions, a distinction central to Stace's search for a core mystical characteristic.

The Concept–Datum Distinction

As Christine Overall (1982) has observed, Stace's understanding of mysticism is indebted to the analysis of experience worked out in his earlier philosophical writings, especially to his phenomenalist rendering of 'the given', a concept popular in Anglo-American sense-datum philosophy during the first half of the twentieth century. In *The Theory of Knowledge and Existence* (1932) and *The Nature of the*

World (1940), Stace set forth his empirical approach to epistemology and metaphysics, a concern with that which is *given* or constructed from the given. The empirical is contrasted with the transcendental:

> I mean by empirical that which does not attempt to transcend the bounds of experience. I mean by transcendental that which does attempt to do so. (1932: 29)

Stace takes *how* things are to be basic: the presented data are 'ultimate facts of experience'. He 'does not seek to go behind them' by speculating on *why* things are, on their origin or relation to things outside experience, such as a cosmic mind, Platonic forms, or Hegelian pure thought (1932: 30). This does not mean that Stace opposes empirical philosophy to transcendental philosophy. He maintains that they are concerned with different problems and are therefore not in conflict. Stace already shows partiality towards a separationist strategy: take two things that may be in conflict and bring them into 'harmony' by isolating them. Later it will be religion and science, and their respective objects—the spiritual One and the natural universe—that will be allowed to coexist in peaceful isolation.

If Stace is to engage in metaphysics, it must be empirical, working from the data of experience with concepts constructed from experience. For Stace, this means rejection of the concept of an external world, which is a purely mental construction in his opinion. Instead, he subscribes to a phenomenalist worldview in which the universe is taken to be a 'colony of multitudes of minds', each with its respective data: 'Each monadic mind possesses and dwells in its own self-enclosed world of givens' (1932: 443). The givens are sense-data (colours, sounds, and so forth), certain relations between the data, and mental states presented as data. Stace does not regard his phenomenalism as a form of idealism: he makes a sharp distinction between the conceptual mind and the data by denying that the latter are meaningfully termed 'ideas' or 'mental' (1932: 88–92). Furthermore, he is not interested in the question of the transcendental origin of the 'given' in a mind more fundamental than the empirical mind. In both respects, he departs from Berkeley.

The mind–data distinction and its incorporation into a phenomenalist metaphysics of mind–data monads are elaborated in *The Nature of the World*. Here Stace declares himself a 'one-world' metaphysician: he rejects 'two-layer' metaphysical theories that distinguish a world of phenomenal appearance from an underlying reality or substratum 'outside and beyond all possible experience':

All existence is on one plane, the plane of possible experience. In our metaphysic the world must be conceived as having only one layer. The real is to be discovered, if anywhere, in what was in earlier times called 'the phenomenal world,' the everyday world of which we are aware through our intellects and senses. ((1940) 1969: 4)

The one-world position expresses his empiricism, according to which 'a being beyond all possible experience has no meaning' ((1940) 1969: 4). Likewise, Stace's religious preference at the time was for one-layer religion, theistic and 'European' in spirit, with a personal God as an integral part of the world, creating it in time. In contrast, two-layer religion, 'Indian' in spirit, envisages a support that manifests the world out of time. Stace's preferences at this stage lie with one-layer Christianity, the 'pure and essential Christianity . . . of plain and simple men', in which 'God is a person among persons' ((1940) 1969: 6), although Stace puts forward an unconventional theism in which the world consists solely of mind–data monads, 'cells' that comprise data and conceptual consciousness of data.

It is noteworthy that Stace was able to find a place for mystical experience in this metaphysical framework. Amongst the community of mind–data cells, there is a special cell, the 'super-cell' or God, which has omniscient consciousness of data. Mystical experience occurs when God enters into the data of an ordinary cell, or, more precisely, when some of the data, feelings, and valuations in the God-cell become represented in the ordinary cell. Despite its outlandish character, the explanation of mysticism offered in *The Nature of the World* is not simply an intellectual exercise, as Stace undoubtedly took mysticism seriously:

I am convinced that the common tendency to be contemptuous of it [mystical experience] is the product of a supercilious materialism and of the prejudice, stupidity, and lack of imagination which are characteristic of commonplace minds. ((1940) 1969: 251–2)

But Stace's discussion remains abstract, for he feels unable to assess the mystical evidence, which would require 'an elaborate examination of the literature of mysticism' ((1940) 1969: 250). If Stace had attempted a characterization of mystical experience at this stage, his metaphysics would have made it difficult for him to understand contentless mystical experience. The introvertive elimination of sense-data, conceptual consciousness, or both together, would result in the obliteration of a cell, not in mystical experience. However, Stace's theory could have accommodated extrovertive experiences,

particularly those that exhibit an expanded range of data, in which the universe or a substantial part of it is experienced. An expanded field of differentiated data could be explained by Stace's theory as a representation in the mystic's cell of the extensive data, feelings, and valuations belonging to the divine, omniscient super-cell.

Of great significance for Stace's later treatment of mysticism is his picture of the cell as a combination of data and conceptual consciousness of the data. In the cell theory, these two aspects are distinct but cannot be separated. There are no data without consciousness, and there is no consciousness without data, for consciousness is the thinking aspect of the cell, reflecting on data, the experiential given. At this stage in his thought, 'pure consciousness' means pure conceptual thinking, not pure awareness. Stace points out, following William James, that pure awareness is not introspectable and therefore not empirically verifiable. Pure awareness would be a pure datum, a datum without thought. Cells would collapse into non-existence if either the conceptual consciousness or the datum was eliminated. The cognitive and datal poles are therefore only 'potentials' or 'limits of possibility', never reached by a cell. Nevertheless, Stace insists on a sharp distinction between the two aspects of the cell, acknowledging the philosopher G. E. Moore for the insight ((1940) 1969: 140). Stace is convinced that the distinction is valid, even though he accepts that some degree of self-consciousness is always present, making consciousness a datum too.

How is the distinction between the 'given' of data and the 'not-given' of conceptual consciousness reflected in Stace's later understanding of mystical consciousness? As Overall (1982: 183) points out, the distinction reappears in the theory of mystical experience as Stace's controversial distinction between interpretation and the mystical core. 'Interpretation' here is similar in meaning to 'consciousness' or 'mind' in the earlier works, namely conceptual construction:

> I use the word 'interpretation' to mean anything which the conceptual intellect adds to the experience for the purpose of understanding it, whether what is added is only classificatory concepts, or a logical inference, or an explanatory hypothesis. (1961: 37)

Stace makes it a presupposition of his enquiry that a distinction is rightly drawn between mystical experience and its interpretation, and to justify the position he cites sense-experience and its interpretation as a parallel case (1961: 31–2, 37). Here Stace draws on his earlier philosophical work but makes no explicit reference to it.

The parallel with sense-experience is used to suggest that the mystic's interpretational constructions, which are liable to error, are distinct from the mystical experience itself, just as an interpretation or misinterpretation of a sensation is distinct from the sensation itself. The distinction makes possible the search for a common mystical core. Ideally, the interpretative layer can be unpeeled to reveal the datum, although Stace suspects that, in practice, attempts to isolate a pure experience in both the mystical and sensory cases are unlikely to be entirely successful (1961: 31).

Over the past thirty years, much scholarly energy has been expended on attacking the proposition that interpretation can be separated from experience. Of course, Stace never contended that ordinary experience is construction-free. He accepted that interpretation is always mixed in with sensory experience, but he thought that the interpretative content could be distinguished from the sense-data, at least to some extent. However, he regarded introvertive mystical experience as different and unique: only here is interpretation eliminated, and only for the course of the experience. Even if it were to be shown that the apprehension of the One involved 'some faint ideational content', unnoticed by the mystic, Stace thinks his case would stand (1961: 130–1). The obscuration would be minimal, with the core experience distinguishable from any ideation during the experience or from any post-experience interpretation.

Whatever one may think of the consciousness–data distinction, the fact that Stace expounded it at length in his earlier works means that it would be harsh to accuse him of philosophical naivety when, in the later writings on mysticism, he claimed that it is possible to distinguish a core, experiential datum from interpretation. The claim rested on his earlier thought, which itself was rooted in the ideas of early twentieth-century empirical philosophy. However, Stace could be faulted for giving insufficient indication of the sources of his experience–interpretation distinction in *Mysticism and Philosophy*. As a result, assessments have generally failed to

TABLE 5.1 Interpretative and datal contents of experience

Type of experience	Interpretation	The empirical given
Ordinary	yes	sense-data
Extrovertive mystical	yes	sense-data + the One
Introvertive mystical	none (or minimal)	the One

take into account the philosophical direction from which Stace approached mysticism.[3]

In summary, Stace's concept–datum epistemology, carried over into the study of mysticism and modified by the introduction of the undifferentiated One as a given, yields the breakdown of experience set out in Table 5.1. The data of extrovertive experience are a mixture of two distinct 'givens', sensory data and the mystical datum, making extrovertive experience a 'halfway house' to the introvertive. It is now evident how Stace's foreground understanding of extrovertive unity, Explanation-A, emerged from his earlier philosophy under the impact of a mysticism of the unconditioned Absolute. The given of ordinary experience was not altered or expanded in any way; it was merely supplemented by the introduction of another given, the mystical One.

Stace's Empirical Reclamation of the Kantian Self

The interpretation–experience distinction represents one continuity in Stace's thought, modified by the incorporation of a pure 'datum', the One. Another continuity is Stace's allegiance to an inclusive version of empiricism. This too undergoes modification in the later works, for the introduction of the One into his empirical philosophy leads to the two-world metaphysics of spirit and world, a duality that has implications for his understanding of extrovertive mysticism. Stace understood his way of reconciling religion and naturalistic science by separating spirit and world as Kantian, although he pointed out that he differed from Kant by placing the spiritual order within the compass of human experience:

> Kant's only mistake was his failure to recognize that man can have direct experience of the eternal order in the mystical vision. (1953: 255)

Because both 'worlds' can be experienced, Stace is able to adopt the conciliatory two-world theory without compromising his long-standing empiricist conviction that something must be experienceable for it to be meaningful. Further, Stace borrows from Kantian philosophy to explain mystical unity in a way that underscores his adherence to Explanation-A. Kant had thought it necessary to postulate a transcendental consciousness as part of the constitution of the human mind, a simple, unchanging subject to which is

[3] Overall (1982: 177) gives examples. Horne (1982) and Barnes (1992) also acknowledge the connection with earlier twentieth-century philosophy.

referenced the manifold of sense-representations. The existence of this unempirical, subjective focus was suggested by the continuity of states of knowing and by the presentation of the manifold as a unified, integral object of consciousness (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A. 107). By advocating an unchanging self as the basis of the phenomenal unity, Kant was adopting a venerable solution to a problem that had become prominent with the rise of associationist philosophy. The traditional solution was to attribute the unity and continuity of perception to the coordinating activity of a unitary soul. Kant's solution was similar, but he made the coordinating self transcendental, that is, beyond experience, yet apparent in the unified character of experience and necessary for there to be any knowledge at all.

Initially, Stace's commitment to his empirical phenomenalism prevented him from taking an interest in transcendental contributions to perception. The Kantian transcendental subject is not a given, and so it was deemed irrelevant by Stace, who noted with approval Hume's observations on the elusiveness of the 'I'. Stace excluded the transcendental self from his philosophy because it was foreign to the empiricism he wished to pursue. In so far as the problem of perceptual unity had a bearing on his earlier philosophizing, Stace took an associationist position, understanding the unity of presentations in different sense-modalities as a construction built up through repeated association (1932: 144). But the problem of perceptual unity was not really an issue for Stace because his empiricist orientation meant that he could take the phenomenal unity as a given, for which underlying reasons were not required. In *Mysticism and Philosophy*, Stace modified his position for he now welcomed the pure ego or Kantian 'transcendental unity of apperception' as a given, that is, as apprehensible in mystical experience (1961: 87). In this way, Stace moved away from Hume's sceptical position on the 'I' to an acceptance of the Kantian pure subject, albeit a pure subject now open to experience and therefore no longer transcendental. With the obliteration of the mystic's empirical ego ('the stream of consciousness'), the pure subject remains, 'the unity which holds the manifold of the stream together. *This undifferentiated unity is the essence of the introvertive mystical experience*' (1961: 87; Stace's emphasis).

Stace forges another link with Kantian philosophy. He asserts that the laws of logic are 'the necessary rules for thinking of or dealing with a *multiplicity* of separate items' (1961: 270) and are

therefore applicable only to a multiplicity. Stace finds a connection here with Kant:

> our theory and that of Kant are alike in one very important respect. Both imply the view that logic is restricted in its application and that there is an area of reality to which it does not apply. For Kant's theory that the categories do not apply to the thing-in-itself certainly entails that the laws of logic do not apply to it. (1961: 274)

Stace argues that some of Kant's categories (unity, plurality, totality, perhaps negation and limitation) express 'the nature of any multiplicity, and are therefore in our view equivalent to the laws of logic' (1961: 274). Thus, paradox or nonlogic belongs to the Kantian transcendental, as it does to Stace's undifferentiated unity.

Of course, Stace departs from Kant in significant ways. For instance, Kant's transcendental unity of apperception is beyond experience, whilst Stace believes that mystics experience it. In addition, Kant does not actively push his transcendental subject as a universal, singular essence common to all minds. For Stace, the One is an essence common to all, and his position is closer in this respect to Schelling's modification of the Kantian transcendental subject. For Schelling, the transcendental subject is not only universal across human minds but also universal as the source of phenomena, placing his idealism close to those systems of world-emanation appreciated by the Romantics, such as the Neoplatonic scheme of procession and return, and Böhme's mystical theosophy. Stace shows little interest in the traditional, emanative function of the One, although in places he does move closer to Otto's treatment by attributing a world-originating role to the One. Unsurprisingly, the One as source is a peripheral idea in Stace's thought, given his early rejection of transcendental speculation, and it has little or no bearing on his analysis of mystical experience, even though he does recognize that it may be open to empirical study. Stace decides that there is some evidence in mystical writings for mystical perceptions of the timeless self-differentiation of the One into the differentiated world (1961: 175–8, 180–2). His linking of the One and the world as the 'creator' and the 'created' respectively is performed in typical fashion, through the assertion of a paradoxical identity of the two (the 'pantheistic' paradox). Likewise, the One as inactive, undifferentiated, impersonal Godhead and the One as creative, differentiated, personal God are brought together in paradoxical identity (the 'vacuum–plenum' paradox). However, Stace's willingness to

attribute a world-manifesting role to the One has no impact on his explanation of extrovertive experience. Stace (1961: 175–6) does refer to mystical experience of the One as source, finding it expressed in passages by Eckhart, Aurobindo, Lao-tzu, and Suzuki, but these experiences are not presented as examples of extrovertive experience. Stace does not seem to realize that he has acknowledged the occurrence of an experience (the self-differentiation of the One) that fits into neither his introvertive category nor his extrovertive category as he defines them.

It is also significant that although Stace recognizes the function of the transcendental subject in Kantian philosophy, which is to bring unity to the sensory manifold, he does not bring the function to bear on the explanation of extrovertive experience. Stace accepts the Kantian subject as a 'pure, original, unchangeable consciousness' but does not give it the unifying function that is its *raison d'être* in Kant's philosophy. Stace could have argued that the unity of the phenomenal multiplicity in both ordinary experience and extrovertive mystical experience is derived from the One, and that in extrovertive experience the source of the unity becomes known. However, Stace does not attempt to consign this function to the One, or explain extrovertive mysticism accordingly, and it is unlikely that he would have attempted to do so, given his commitment to phenomena as data, in need of no further explanation.

Stace's empirical reclamation of the Kantian transcendental is partial and selective, firmly curtailed by his empirical phenomenalism. The transcendental subject is brought into experience but is shorn of its unifying role in perception, and it is universalized into a common consciousness, which Stace believes is rightly interpreted as a 'self'. The things-in-themselves continue to be rejected as unnecessary constructions, and likewise, the a priori categories of pure thought are of no interest, in line with Stace's earlier view that they can equally well be explained empirically. The Kantian elements adopted by Stace are the 'unity of apperception' or pure subject without content, the phenomenal manifold, the confinement of logic to the phenomenal, and the notion that space and time belong to the constructed appearances. In this last respect, Stace is in accord with Otto. Space and time are 'forms of sensibility', impositions on the sensory intuitions, and they would disappear if cognition ceased. This Kantian conception of space and time surfaces in Stace's repeated claim that the mystical is nonspatial and nontemporal.

EXTROVERTIVE UNITY AS PARADOXICAL IDENTITY-IN-DIFFERENCE

In Explanation-A, the mystical unity has no bearing on the sensory contents. Extrovertive experience has two distinct components, a pure, timeless, spaceless, logic-defying unity and a sensory-intellectual, spatio-temporal, logic-obeying multiplicity. However, a different understanding sometimes shows, one that appears most clearly when Stace discusses apparent cases of extrovertive experience. The examples confront Stace with statements of the type 'all things are one' and 'all is in all', which suggest a deep unity between things. Stace was aware of the phraseology when he discussed mysticism in the early 1950s, for it occurs in some of the illustrative examples he quoted at the time. Passages attributed to Eckhart, taken from Otto's *Mysticism East and West*, suggest to Stace a mystical identity of things:

> All that a man has here externally in multiplicity is intrinsically One. Here all blades of grass, wood, and stone, all things are one. This is the deepest depth. (1953: 240)

Stace notes Hegel's concept of 'identity in difference' but adds that Hegel merely theorized about it, whilst mystics experience it.

When Stace came to distinguish the extrovertive type at the beginning of the 1960s, the Eckhart passages and the idea of identity-in-difference emerge again. The statement 'all blades of grass, wood, and stone, all things are one' is taken to be typical of the extrovertive type. The mystic sees grass, wood, and stone but experiences them simultaneously as many and one. They are 'many' because distinctions remain: the grass is still grass, the wood still wood, the stone still stone. Although distinct, they are also 'one'. Stace rejects a possible meaning of 'one' as trivial, namely the integral unity in which parts make up a whole, just as the page of a book is 'one piece of paper but is composed of many parts' (1961: 64). Extrovertive unity is *not* integral unity but an 'identity' between parts. The mystic not only perceives the wood to be distinct from the stone and grass but also perceives the wood to be *identical* with the stone and grass:

> it is evident that in this extrovertive experience the distinctions between things have not wholly disappeared. There is no doubt that what Eckhart means is that he sees the three things as distinct and separate and yet at the same time as not distinct but identical. The grass is identical with the stone, and the stone with the wood, although they are all different. (1960: 16)

Stace admits that distinction with full identity is a contradiction, a complete paradox, but he insists that distinction is necessary for mystical identity. Difference and identity go hand in hand: wood and stone must be distinct if they are to be identified. Otherwise there would not be two things to identify. This state of affairs is paradoxical because things that are completely identified ('wood *is* stone') cannot be distinct. It can, of course, be questioned whether *simultaneous* distinction-and-identity is really necessary for a full identity, as Stace claims. Two things may be distinct initially, exhibiting differences that are overcome when the complete state of identity is reached, yielding just one thing. The previous state of difference then makes talk of identity meaningful. Alternatively, two things can be identical in an important respect, say, in essence, but not *in toto*. Or two things can be identical in a manner that combines the previous alternatives: two distinct things could at one moment share a common essence and later lose their differences so that they become pure essence and are just one thing. This seems to be Eckhart's meaning, a complete identity of *essence* in God but only a partial distinction and a partial identity when distinctions remain. Whatever the case, Stace's Explanation-B is not unambiguously supported by the Eckhart examples, which require careful interpretation within the context of Eckhart's philosophy. The only other example cited by Stace that could be taken to support Explanation-B also proves unsatisfactory. The example is a Plotinian passage that refers to the interpenetration of beings in the intelligible realm ('Each is there all and all is each'), which Stace takes from Otto's discussion of unifying vision. However, examination of the full text (*Enneads* v. 8. 4) shows that Plotinus does not claim complete identity, for some kind of differentiating principle is admitted. True, there is identity-in-difference in the Plotinian intelligible universe, but it is not Stace's paradoxical *complete* identity with distinction. It is qualified or partial identity. Stace's other cases of extrovertive experience (Böhme, N.M., Teresa, Rāmakrishna, Bucke) exemplify neither Explanation-B nor Explanation-A, as their unities are neither paradoxical identity-in-difference nor the empty unity.

Towards the end of *Mysticism and Philosophy*, Stace moves away from his paradoxical identity-in-difference explanation but creates confusion by leaving the explanation in place in earlier parts of the book. He withdraws from Explanation-B because his discussion of logic has led him to assign paradoxical language to the description of

the undifferentiated One, whilst retaining logic for the world of multiplicity. But Stace is confronted by the 'all is one' of extrovertive mysticism. Why do mystics apply their paradoxical slogan 'all things are one' to the differentiated, logic-obeying objects of extrovertive experience? Stace realizes that there is a problem and wonders if there is a contradiction since he has argued that logic applies to the sphere of multiplicity and paradox to the One. Why do mystics utter paradoxical statements about multiplicity when they are applicable only to the One? In order to preserve logic for the multiplicity, Stace has to extract the paradoxical unity from the multiplicity:

> the sense objects which the extrovertive experience perceives to be 'all One' are not themselves parts of the extrovertive One, which is therefore in itself undifferentiated and contentless. (1961: 152)

Stace's solution is to separate the nonlogical unity from the logical multiplicity and assert Explanation-A (1961: 273–4, 286), which, after all, is his primary explanation of mystical unity and the means by which he reconciles naturalism and religion. 'All things are one' refers not to a unity amongst the members of a multiplicity but to the One 'behind and beyond' the multiplicity. Stace sets aside Explanation-B but creates confusion amongst later commentators by promoting it in earlier parts of the study and by alluding to it in his influential summary lists of extrovertive characteristics: 'All is One' and 'all things are One' (1961: 79, 131).

It is disappointing that Stace's allegiance to a broad empiricism, open to mystical experience as a valid source of data, failed to translate into careful study of the data. Once again, preconceptions rather than evidence steered explanation. Stace had access to two relevant and comparatively unambiguous first-order accounts, the testimonies of Bucke and N.M., but he failed to capitalize because his theoretical preconceptions blinded him to the evidence. Stace was inventive in his philosophical borrowings, but his efforts were undermined by a lack of close attention to the accounts, which resulted in a characterization that has major omissions and in an explanation that fails to address not only the commonly experienced unities of extrovertive experience but other features too, such as the range of noetic characteristics, temporal inclusivity, special luminosity, and powerful feelings of love. Stace's earlier theory of mystical experience, using the God-cell idea, stood a better chance of explaining rich extrovertive phenomenology, for it allowed the mystic to experience the world as it is experienced by the omniscient God.

Noetic and visionary expansions of cosmic extent are perhaps explicable in this framework. But Stace abandoned the God-cell theory along with theism before he came to recognize extrovertive experience. By this time, he was entrenched in his conception of empty consciousness as 'mystical' and phenomena as 'non-mystical', with the explanatory consequences I have traced above.

Permanent Extrovertive Experience

Mystical typologies of the kind proposed by Stace began to draw criticism in the 1970s from scholars who argued that mystical experiences are specific to the religious contexts in which they occur. This claim, which is the subject of the next chapter, proved fashionable but also stirred up opposition.[4] One of the most vigorous critics has been Robert Forman, who raised pure consciousness as a counter-example (1986) and brought together an array of scholarly critiques in his edited volume *The Problem of Pure Consciousness* (1990*b*). The *pure consciousness event* (PCE), as Forman calls it, shows no signs of being conditioned by tradition and culture (1990*a*: 21–5). To help illustrate the PCE, Forman has discussed his own experiences gained through the practice of Transcendental Meditation. During meditation, Forman sometimes loses awareness of thoughts and perceptions, but afterwards he believes that he has remained awake because there is no sense of a break in consciousness and no after-sleep effects, such as a 'groggy' feeling (1998*a*: 190; 1999: 20–1). Like Stace's introvertive experience, Forman's PCE is contentless without being a state of unconsciousness. It is 'wakeful contentless consciousness' (1990*a*: 21).

In recent years, Forman's initial focus on the simple, unconditionable PCE has broadened to include two phenomenologically more complex states, and it has become apparent that his understanding of extrovertive experience departs from Stace's in important ways, notably in Forman's treatment of extrovertive experience as a permanent state. There are, however, points of contact. In Forman's *dualistic mystical state* (DMS), pure consciousness is experienced alongside but separately from ordinary awareness of objects. The subject experiences the world of multiplicity in the usual

[4] The debate has generated an extensive literature. As a starting point, see the collections edited by Katz (1978*b*; 1983*b*) and Forman (1990*b*; 1998*b*).

way, perceptually, cognitively, affectively, but at the same time has an awareness of pure consciousness. In its dual structure, DMS closely resembles the extrovertive experience of Stace's Explanation-A, which combines pure consciousness and normal sensory-intellectual consciousness without integration of the two. Again, Forman draws on his own practice to illustrate the state. In 1972, after a couple of years of practice, he achieved an inner silence that carried over into his everyday experiences (1998*a*: 194; 1999: 138–46). His thoughts, feelings, and sensations now took place against a 'silent background', which he understood to be his 'self' or 'I'. Experience therefore consisted of the silent self (i.e. pure consciousness) on the one hand, and sensations, thoughts, and emotions on the other. However, the sensory contents were not entirely unaffected by the change: visual perception seemed to gain 'depth', a greater three-dimensionality of the visual field (1999: 143).

Forman reports that the interior silence has persisted and grown over the years, expanding into the body and even a few feet beyond the body (1998*a*: 195). These changes are perhaps indicative of a transition towards the next state identified by Forman, the *unitive mystical state* (UMS), akin to experiences that have been called 'extrovertive mysticism' or 'nature mysticism'. In the UMS, there is an experience of the unity of 'one's own awareness *per se* with the objects around one' (1998*a*: 186). Consciousness is no longer separate from its objects, and there is a feeling that the self now permeates 'with and through, the things of the world' (1998*a*: 199). The silent self that was separate from the world in the DMS is connected with the world in the UMS. By recognizing the UMS, Forman goes beyond Stace, who overlooked cases of unitive merger of subject and object. Stace kept pure consciousness and the world firmly apart, whereas Forman unifies them in the UMS and therefore implicitly rejects Stace's metaphysics of two sharply divided realms. It is not too clear how Forman envisages the coming together of pure consciousness and the environment. He makes tentative suggestions about the 'field-like' nature of consciousness, which is able to connect with external bodies, and he also suggests that consciousness may be common to all objects in an animistic or panpsychic fashion.

Significantly, Forman also departs from Stace by understanding extrovertive experience as a *permanent* condition and an *advanced* mystical state, as Forman himself has made explicit and others

too have observed (e.g. Connolly 2000). Forman recognizes the impermanence of some extrovertive experiences but believes that a permanent state is possible. Mystical development for Forman begins with the transient and rudimentary PCE, becomes stabilized in the more advanced DMS, and comes to fruition in the self–world unity of the UMS. Stace, in contrast, regarded the extrovertive experience as inferior, an impermanent and incomplete step towards the introvertive experience, which can be made permanent. In Forman's terminology, Stace's permanent introvertive experience would be a permanent DMS. The key to the contrasting evaluations appears to be the context of Forman's thinking. Stace regarded extrovertive experience as a *spontaneous* affair, not open to cultivation, whereas Forman approaches extrovertive experience through a system of meditative *practice* that is designed to yield stable states. The same is true of Jonathan Shear, who suggests that extrovertive experience relies on 'prior familiarity' with the introvertive experience (1994: 330 n. 14). Like Stace, Shear takes the extrovertive experience to be a combination of two components, pure consciousness and ordinary consciousness, but unlike Stace, he regards extrovertive experience as a more advanced stage in meditative development, and he brings the two components into relation. For Shear, the introvertive component is experienced as 'underlying' the phenomenal component, which may be thought to give '*prima facie* support' to the perennialist notion of a ground that supports the world, a ground akin to the self within (1994: 320).

Despite Forman's emphasis on permanence, virtually all of his illustrations of UMS are either fairly brief experiences or the disputable historical cases of Plotinus and the Buddha (1998*a*: 198–9). The most promising example is taken from Bernadette Roberts's story of her spiritual journey. Watching a seagull in flight, Roberts identified with the bird and then with the hills in the vicinity (Roberts 1993: 32; Forman 1998*a*: 199). This initial experience appears to have been a fairly straightforward extrovertive experience, characterized by the subject–object unity we would expect of Forman's UMS. However, the ensuing 'Oneness' of things that lasted for nine months was not a straightforward UMS, for it lacked the subject–object unity. Objects in the visual field lost their individuality, but Roberts felt excluded and distanced from the unity, as if she were a detached observer (1993: 37–8). The special 'seeing' took place from the top of her head or a little above it, a somatic awareness that along with other phenomena described by Roberts may be indicative of *kuṇḍalinī*

activity.[5] After nine months, the sense of Oneness faded into a sterile feeling of inner and outer 'emptiness', a 'deadness' that lasted for four months (1993: 46–8). It is possible that Roberts eventually found her way to a permanent UMS, with the required subject–object unity, although it is difficult to say for sure from her descriptions. The complexity of the case serves as a reminder that experiences 'in the wild' do not necessarily fit easily into tidy schemes.

It is no accident that Forman's classification of states resembles the developmental scheme set out in Transcendental Meditation (TM), the practice through which he achieved his own experiences of PCE and DMS. The founder of the movement, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, has described seven states of consciousness, beginning with dreamless sleep, dreaming, and waking.[6] The fourth state, achieved through the practice of TM, is called *transcendental consciousness*. Here perceptual awareness of the world has faded away, along with all mental activity, leaving only 'pure consciousness' or 'pure self-awareness'. Objects of consciousness have disappeared, but the pure, reflexive self remains. Clearly, the fourth state is very similar to Forman's PCE and Stace's introvertive experience. Like Stace and the exponents of TM, Forman interprets the inner silence as the 'self', an interpretation that is by no means inevitable, even amongst those willing to accord the silence some spiritual significance. For instance, many Buddhists would discuss the 'silence' as a subtle level of mind that supports grosser states, such as the 'brightly shining mind' (*prabhāsvara citta*) beneath ordinary mental states (see Harvey 1995). They would reject any suggestion that it is an essential self in the Upanishadic mould, the eternal self (*ātman*) identified with the supreme ground (*Brahman*). However, unlike the exponents of TM, Forman does not dwell on the self as the Absolute. His approach has been phenomenological rather than metaphysical, directed towards a 'perennial psychology', the cross-cultural study of common psychological states and structures (Forman 1998*b*: 28).

So far, the TM scheme simply re-expresses the doctrine of the four states of consciousness (*catuṣpād*) that emerged out of the *Upaniṣads*

[5] Note, in particular, the bodily disturbances at the beginning of Roberts's 'Great Passageway' (1993: 54–5).

[6] On the seven states, see for instance Campbell (1974) and Alexander *et al.* (1990). On laboratory studies designed to explore the physiological correlates of pure consciousness during the practice of TM, see Shear and Jevning (1999), and Shear (2001).

and which became prominent in Vedantic teachings.[7] The four states are waking, dreaming, deep sleep, and 'the fourth' (*turīya*), a state of tranquil, pure self-awareness. The TM scheme then adopts another traditional term for its fifth state, the state 'beyond the fourth' (*turīyātīta*). The practitioner, after switching between pure consciousness and waking consciousness on many occasions, is able to maintain the two together in a dual state for extended periods. Awareness of the pure self is now maintained throughout waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. The state is called *cosmic consciousness*, although there is nothing particularly cosmic about it if pure consciousness merely rests alongside ordinary perceptual, cognitive, and affective experience. The cosmic consciousness of TM clearly resembles Forman's DMS. Both are states of dual awareness and both arise out of repeated, meditative familiarity with pure consciousness. Neither is properly 'extrovertive' by my usage of the term, as set out in Chapter 1. The world is not a focus of the experiences: the 'mystical' character lies in the 'pure self' component.

In the sixth and seventh states, the separateness of pure self and perceptual awareness is overcome, so that the dual state turns into a unitive state in which the pure self, previously a passive subject, is now found to be linked with the activity of the world. In terms of the unities described in Chapter 2, empty unity gives way to source unity and incorporative and identificatory unities. In the sixth state (*God consciousness*), external perception is said to become so 'refined' that new aspects of the world are perceived, including the connection between the pure self and perceptual contents. Self or consciousness flows out into the world. In the seventh state (*unity consciousness*), the sense of unity reaches a peak. Self and world come together in a perfect unity that is both many and one. The world is still diversified, but it is seen to be unified in the Self. The Maharishi (1969: 314–15) supposes that the shift from the dual cosmic consciousness to the higher, unified condition corresponds to an integration of two independent levels of function in the nervous system. Reflecting on the scheme, Anthony Campbell equates the fourth TM state with Stace's introvertive experience, and the fifth, sixth, and seventh with extrovertive experience (1974: 105–6). The parallel is not perfect because Stace does not regard extrovertive experience as a development out of introvertive experience, and he does not acknowledge the

[7] Fort (1990) explores the development of the *catuṣpād* doctrine, including its modern uses.

subject–object unity of the sixth and seventh states. The fit is much closer with Forman's scheme: the fourth state corresponds to PCE, the fifth to DMS, and the sixth and seventh to UMS. There is also an interesting parallel with the experiential levels described in nondual Kashmir Śaivism, if Paul Muller-Ortega's reading of these levels accurately reflects the traditional understandings (1996: 204–6): the aspirant passes from pure consciousness to a dualistic state of pure consciousness and everyday consciousness (waking, sleeping, and dreaming), and then on to various higher levels in which the dualism is transcended and the world absorbed into consciousness.

It should now be clear that Forman's emphasis on the permanence of extrovertive experience derives from his focus on the cultivation of states through meditation, and, more particularly, on a method of cultivation through which pure consciousness is first isolated, and then, after repeated practice, brought into a dual state with ordinary experience. The dual state is then integrated and deepened to yield a permanent extrovertive state. The TM programme is ambitious, for it expects practitioners to become conversant with the highly elusive pure ground as a *first* step, and then to carry over the recognition into extrovertive states. By way of comparison, we can take note of the Plotinian contemplative route, in which apprehension of the ground occurs at the *summit* of the mystical movement, not at the first step. According to Plotinus, the ground of all things, the One, is always present, closer to us than we are to ourselves, whether we are awake or asleep. We are not usually turned towards this subtle presence, which cannot be grasped by thought, and so it is necessary, after intellectual and moral preparation, to turn away from sense-perception. So far the account is similar in general terms to the TM one: the aspirant is encouraged to turn inwards to find the ever-present but subtle and ungraspable ground of reality. However, the Plotinian introvertive movement is directed not at the elusive One in the first place but at the vision of the intelligible cosmos. There are dangers in following this route, for the inexperienced may react in unfortunate ways to the overwhelming cosmic beauty, but it does provide an assisted path to the One. From the exalted vantage point of the cosmic vision, the soul is better able to receive the One because it can hitch a ride, so to speak, on the updraught of the cosmic Intellect as it reverts to its source, the One. Plotinus does not appear to envisage a *continuous* awareness of the intelligible cosmos or union with the One for embodied beings. Rather, the aspirant rises to vision and union and then falls away from them, and repeats the

process in due course (*Enneads* VI. 9. 10–11). Continuous awareness is reserved for the gods and those who join them when the mortal body has been shed.

Forman is right to draw attention to prolonged cases of extrovertive experience. Although rare, some modern accounts do describe experiences that persisted for days, weeks, and months. However, it is not clear if experiences have ever persisted indefinitely, although John Wren-Lewis's experience is a possible case, for it has lasted for many years, with some fluctuations. Suzanne Segal's experiences also endured for long periods. In 1982, a DMS-like state set in abruptly and lasted for several months: here the 'witness awareness' seemed to be located a foot behind the body, left of the head, a dislocation of consciousness that is comparable to Bernadette Roberts's state of 'Oneness', which had the witness consciousness at the top of the head. Segal's dual state, which frightened her greatly, was followed by an even more disturbing condition of 'no-self' that lasted for about ten years. After gaining reassurance from spiritual teachers, Segal found her no-self condition giving way to a joyful UMS-like state that persisted without complications until she became ill in 1996. As a former TM practitioner, Segal attempted to equate the succession of states with TM's successive stages of cosmic consciousness, God consciousness, and unity consciousness (1998: 133), although the 'no-self' experience was not easily reconciled with God consciousness and made more sense in a Buddhist interpretative framework. But Segal did not attribute her enduring experiences to her TM training, which she had given up a few years before the dual state began. It would be interesting to know if any TM practitioners have reached a mature and permanent 'unity consciousness' by persisting with their TM practices. Alexander *et al.* (1990: 321–2, 326–7) quote from testimonies furnished by advanced TM practitioners, but it is impossible to tell from these snippets how deep and enduring their extrovertive experiences really were.

It seems unlikely that intense extrovertive experiences could be maintained for long, without extreme exhaustion and gross impairment of everyday functioning, as well as depression when the state finally comes to an end. A truly permanent extrovertive state may have to be a fairly low-key affair compared with the concentrated episodes of extrovertive unity, knowledge, love, and luminosity, which usually last for only a few seconds, minutes, or hours, or in rare cases, days or weeks. And it seems especially unlikely that a permanent extrovertive state would be one of those really expansive and intense extrovertive

experiences that appear to reach beyond ordinary sense-experience to a cosmic level. If extrovertive experience is to persist for long periods, it may have to stay fairly close to ordinary experience, with the world appearing very much as usual, but with some mild extrovertive enhancements. These could include the kind of source unity that Wren-Lewis has experienced for many years, the ever-present sense that everything emerges moment-to-moment from a source. Or it may involve a feeling that consciousness is extending into the world a little, as in Forman's more recent experience. There could also be an enduring feeling that one is immersed in the whole, perhaps as part of a more general 'nondual awareness' of things. As we shall see in the next chapter, nondual awareness refers to a way of apprehending the world in which conditioned patterns of thinking and feeling, structured primarily around self–other distinctions, subside and perhaps largely fade away. Experience becomes less 'head-centred', less preoccupied with past and future, less judgemental; it becomes more perceptual, more attentive to the now, more accepting. A mild, enduring extrovertive state could be like this: no special luminosities, no visual expansions, no great insights, just a calm flow of experience in which self no longer stands out at the expense of the rest of the stream, allowing greater perceptual awareness and a more loving attitude towards others. It is conceivable that some persons live naturally in this condition, without realizing that there is anything special or 'mystical' about it.

Nevertheless, some traditional and popular depictions of the 'enlightened' state give the impression that an enduring condition of great mystical profundity is attained, far more noetic, blissful, and visionary than the mild nondual state suggested above. Of course, these exuberant depictions may just be pious idealizations. Wren-Lewis (1991; 1994) has not been greatly impressed by traditional understandings of enlightenment as a permanent, infallible, godlike condition, and he doubts the efficacy of spiritual practices undertaken to bring about a permanent transformation, such as TM. His own initiation came unbidden, in unlikely circumstances, through the ingestion of a poisoned toffee. Likewise, Segal was reluctant to recommend spiritual practices, at least those in which it is assumed that a self undertakes the practice (1998: 144–7). Her first enduring state, the dual condition of dislocated awareness, occurred spontaneously when she stepped onto a bus. Wren-Lewis and Segal probably go too far, but they are right to deflate the often exaggerated claims that have been made for meditation by some modern proponents.

If embodied liberation does not bring a *permanent* state of deep extrovertive mystical experience, is it simply the mild nondual state sketched above? There is another possibility. Perhaps we can understand 'permanent state' to mean a permanent *capacity* for mystical experience rather than a permanent mystical experience: the liberated being is not tied to one state but possesses an effortless ability to access all levels of experience. Operating from a baseline state of ordinary consciousness or, more likely, the mild nondual awareness, the liberated consciousness can shift as the situation demands through a range of altered states, including profound cosmic visions and the sense of contact with a ground reality. This seems to be the case for the embodied Plotinian mystic, who does not remain in exalted states continuously but accesses them intermittently through meditative practices. Likewise, the Buddha's omniscience has sometimes been portrayed as a capacity, rather than as a continuous state. His 'knowledge-and-vision' is said to have arisen when he turned his mind to anything he wished to know. By contrast, it appears that certain contemporaries of the Buddha claimed to have reached a continuous state of all-embracing knowledge-and-vision, a claim that is ridiculed in some early Buddhist writings (Naughton 1991).

Whether continuous or intermittent, the deep extrovertive states accessed by proficient mystics may not have quite the same phenomenology as the short-lived, one-off experiences recorded in so many modern accounts. With repeated familiarity, personal reactions may die away, such as the feelings of relief, surprise, unworthiness, discomfort, wonder, and terror. Even the awesome cosmic vision could become rather dull for those who know it well and come to look for more: Plotinus notes that souls are uninspired by the cosmic beauty when they are unable to discern in it the illumination of the One (*Enneads* VI. 7. 22).

But all this is highly speculative, and, unsurprisingly, there is little consensus amongst the traditions over what exactly embodied liberation, enlightenment, or sagehood entails. Even amongst associated traditions that have devoted considerable attention to the matter, such as those grouped together under the 'Hindu' umbrella, there can be very different opinions on the nature of the perfected state and its attainability for those still tied to the body (see Fort and Mumme 1996; Fort 1998). And without clear depictions of the liberated person's experience, the relation between extrovertive experience and religious conceptions of the liberated state is no easy matter to study.

6
Scholars Lock Horns

Construction or Deconstruction?

According to Stace, genuine mystical experiences are essentially the same across religions because they have pure consciousness at their mystical core. In subscribing to this view, Stace was just the latest of a long line of thinkers who maintained that a common mystical core lies at the heart of diverse religious traditions. But even as Stace's *Mysticism and Philosophy* was becoming established as an authoritative text, shifts in the wider intellectual scene were preparing the ground for an emphatic rejection of a cross-cultural, interpretation-free mystical core. In the 1960s, essences and universals were losing ground to social constructions and cultural relativisms. The separability of sense-data and interpretation had been called into question by philosophers, and experience was looking more and more subjective, loaded with concepts and conditioned by beliefs and emotions. Psychologists had been investigating the influence of set and setting on perception, and radical philosophers of science were contending that even scientific observations, the supposed acme of objectivity, are shaped by theoretical presuppositions.

Students of comparative mysticism were not immune from the Zeitgeist, although they were a little tardy in catching up with the philosophers and social scientists. Since the late 1970s and early 1980s, a fierce debate has revolved around the 'construction' of mystical experience. Some theorists have claimed that mystical experiences are constructed from the ideas and images made available to mystics through their religious training and cultural backgrounds. According to these *radical contextualists*, as I shall call them, mystical experience is largely a product of indoctrination and enculturation and therefore varies across religions and cultures. Other theorists have taken a very different position: mystical experiences result from a deconstruction of ordinary experience. For these *mystical deconstructivists*, spiritual practices bring about the removal of cognitive and affective impositions that ordinarily structure experience, yielding either the pure consciousness of Stace and Forman,

or, more interestingly for the study of extrovertive experience, a nondual and content-rich state of awareness.

It is conceivable that each of the two positions has some valid area of application. Perhaps some spiritual experiences are highly dependent on indoctrination and enculturation, whilst others emerge through a stripping away of prior conditioning. It would be premature to accept one position as universally valid without testing it out on different kinds of experiences. In the case of extrovertive experience, the deconstructivist approach seems the more promising. Feelings of unity could be put down to the elimination of divisive concepts and feelings that underpin the usual sense of differentiation from the world. In contrast, the radical contextualist approach, with its enormous stress on religious tradition and reinforcing practices, seems far less relevant. Unlike, say, visions of the Blessed Virgin or Kṛṣṇa, extrovertive experiences do not seem to be set within a clear tradition of conditioning ideas, exemplars, and practices, at least for the many modern subjects who had no prior knowledge of mystical states and no training in facilitative exercises.

After locating the two positions in a framework of mystical epistemologies, I first consider radical contextualism, indicating the pluralistic impetus behind it, its epistemological standpoint, and criticisms that can be levelled against it. Although radical contextualism proves unsatisfactory, the possibility of some contextual contributions should not be ruled out. In particular, some visionary and noetic contents, especially the phantasmagorias of drug-induced cases, are no doubt influenced by culturally available ideas and images. I then turn to deconstructivism, noting its background in traditional philosophies and modern psychology. Although promising, deconstructivism can be only a part of the story, for it is unable to account for the full range of extrovertive characteristics and must be supplemented by other ideas.

Mystical Epistemologies

How do mystics come to know the objects of their mystical experiences? It has often been assumed that nothing at all or nothing significant comes between mystics and the spiritual realities they intuit, at least in the profoundest experiences (Model A, Figure 6.1). In the case of mystical union, the conjunction of experience and object is said to be very close: to experience the mystical object is

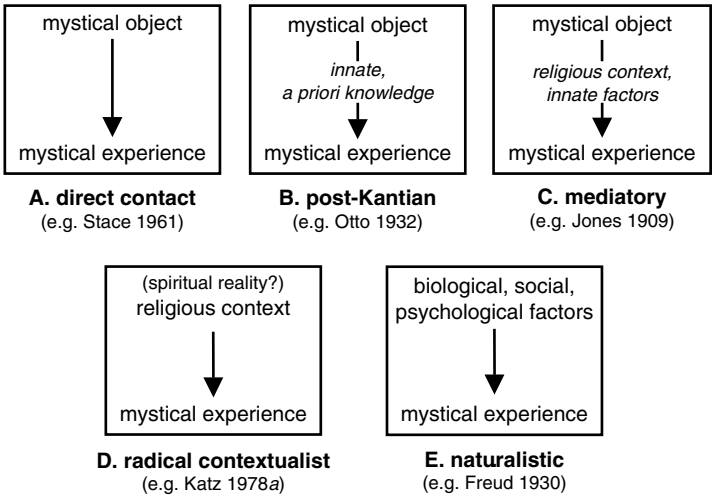

FIGURE 6.1 Some epistemological models of mystical experience.

to discover that one shares the object's nature. The conjunction is even closer if identity is claimed. Carpenter explained that if one is to know the universal Self one must become identified with it (1904*a*: 217–18). Stace claimed that the core mystical experience is identical with the mystical object: 'the experience *is* the One' (1960: 15). Robert Forman has raised the idea of 'knowledge by identity' to explain the pure consciousness event: the subject knows the pure consciousness by being it (1993; 1999: 109–27). In the case of extrovertive experience, an idealist could claim that the mystic is directly in touch with the world because the world exists as the contents of the mystic's expansive mind (Chapter 8). Deconstructivists can adopt direct-contact epistemologies: according to Aldous Huxley, the mystic comes face to face with spiritual reality when the 'doors of perception' are cleansed. But as we shall see below, deconstructivists can also take naturalistic or agnostic stances on the existence of the mystical object.

Another epistemological model, Kantian in background, retains the mystical object but interposes an innate knowledge or capacity between the object and the mystic (Model B). Kant's 'Copernican revolution' in epistemology had shifted the centre of gravity from the object to the perceiving subject by giving great weight to the subject's contribution to experience. The subject experiences the world through an inborn apparatus of judgements and categories, so that experience is, in effect, a 'synthesis' or 'construction' of

sensory and innate contributions. Sensory intuitions from the external object are made to conform to the subject's a priori concepts. As it stands, Kantian epistemology is not concerned with mystical experience. But we have seen that in Otto's adaptation, there is a priori knowledge of spiritual reality.

Modern scientific accounts of perception modify Kantian epistemology in two ways. First, the innate contribution is understood in a less philosophical way: innate categories and judgements are replaced by innate cognitive and physiological structures and processes. Second, learned concepts and ideas are admitted as contributing influences, as are affective and motivational set. An epistemological model of mystical experience that adopted the modifications would retain the mystical object, but it would replace the a priori knowledge with learned, contextual contributions in conjunction with innate cognitive and/or physiological processing (Model C). Rufus Jones was an early proponent of a mediatory epistemology that emphasized contextual contributions. Jones wrote:

> There are no 'pure experiences,' *i.e.* no experiences which come wholly from *beyond* the person who has them . . . ((1909) 1936: xxxiv; Jones's emphasis)

In Jones's view, mystical experience is never an entirely transpersonal affair, for it is always '*partly* a product of the social and intellectual environment' in which the mystic grows up ((1909) 1936: xxxiv).[1] As Philip Almond has observed, the claim anticipates later contextualists (1982; 1990). However, Jones was more moderate, claiming only a partial conditioning of mystical experience by social suggestion. The mystical object still makes a fundamental contribution, even though it is mediated by religion and society. More recently, John Hick has outlined a mediatory epistemology, drawing inspiration from Kant as well as mid-twentieth-century philosophical and psychological notions of constructed experience, such as the Wittgensteinian distinction between straightforward 'seeing' and interpreted 'seeing as'. In *An Interpretation of Religion* (1989), Hick hypothesizes that there is a spiritual reality behind the world's religious faiths, and that this reality, 'the Real', has an impact on mystics at a deep, unconscious level. But the 'information' conveyed

[1] See also Laski (1961: 283, 295). Jones directs the reader to Henri Delacroix's *Études d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme* (1908) for an able treatment of the subject.

by the impact is dressed in culturally specific forms supplied by the mystic's memory and imagination before it enters conscious experience. For Hick, mystical experiences, including experiences of God, Brahman, and the 'universal totality', are 'joint products of a transcendent reality and of the mystic's own mind-set' (1989: 165, 294–5).

The radical contextualist model takes the contribution of context a step further by minimizing or eliminating the contribution of the spiritual reality. Mystical experience is largely a product of doctrinal and cultural factors (Model D). The model arose as a critique of direct-contact epistemology (Model A): Steven Katz famously announced that '*There are* NO *pure* (*i.e. unmediated*) *experiences*' (1978*a*: 26; Katz's emphasis), words strikingly reminiscent of Jones's statement. But radical contextualist epistemology is not really mediatory because it downplays the role of the spiritual reality. Mystical experiences primarily disclose the credal and cultural backgrounds of mystics, not the mystical object. The model is reductive in so far as it goes against the subject's belief that deeper reality has been contacted. However, this is not to say that contextualists must side with naturalistic theorists by denying the existence of spiritual realities. Radical contextualists such as Katz (1978*a*: 22–3) take an agnostic stance: they do not claim that spiritual realities are non-existent, only that mystical experiences are 'constituted' by socially acquired 'concepts and beliefs' (Proudfoot 1985: 219). There may well be a spiritual reality, but it is well hidden and makes little or no contribution to the experiences.

Finally, theories of mystical experience may not only minimize the contribution from a mystical object but also deny the existence of the object. In naturalistic epistemologies (Model E), mystical experience is entirely the product of biological, psychological, and social factors, as conceived by naturalistic science. The theories are reductive because they go against the mystic's belief that a deeper reality has been contacted; they are naturalistic because they have no place at all for the mystical object. The explanations of extrovertive experience put forward by Zaehner and Freud belong to this category (Chapter 7). Deconstructivist theories can be naturalistic if they give no spiritual significance to the deconditioned flow of experience. There is no contact with a spiritual reality: mystical experience is simply ordinary experience shorn of its dualizing concepts and feelings.

Radical Contextualism

The motivation behind radical contextualism was laudable. All too often, scholars had found unanimity amongst the world's religions in a shared 'perennial' mystical philosophy, without paying attention to real differences between the mystical traditions. R. C. Zaehner was an earlier critic of the perennialists, but the radical contextualists went further in their pursuit of differences. They attacked not only the perennialist conflation of mystical traditions but also the essentialist conviction that the same mystical experiences occur across traditions. Radical contextualists contended that mystical experiences are specific to the religious traditions in which they occur ('pluralistic thesis'), and they argued for this specificity by maintaining that mystical experiences are shaped by their contexts ('contextual thesis').

THE PLURALISTIC THESIS: MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE IS RELIGION-SPECIFIC

Radical contextualism arose in the 1970s as a critique of the essentialism popular in mystical studies up to that time, which held that religions are united by a common core of mystical experience. Already in 1972, Bruce Garside had delineated the basic position. His stated aim was to support the few scholars who had departed from the 'prevalent view' that 'mystical experiences are essentially the same' across all times and cultures (1972: 93). Katz voiced similar intentions: 'this entire paper is a "plea for the recognition of differences" ' (1978*a*: 25). He directed his own 'pluralistic account' against three positions he considered insufficiently pluralistic. Ranked in order of sophistication, the three unsatisfactory 'theses' progress from outright mystical essentialism to cross-tradition typology. In abridged form, the first thesis can be stated thus:

1. Mystical experiences and reports are the same across traditions.

Katz attributes the early popularity of this least sophisticated thesis to missionary intentions: an ecumenical desire to find common ground between religions, and a dogmatism that asserts 'all religions really teach the same as my religion teaches'. Aldous Huxley and Frithjof Schuon are named as representatives.

Katz labels the second thesis 'essentialist reductionism' because the differences between reports are 'reduced' to a common experiential essence:

2. Mystical experiences are the same across traditions, but the reports differ.

Katz considers the thesis an advance because it recognizes differences between reports. Representatives include D. T. Suzuki, Otto, and Underhill, even though Otto and Underhill distinguished *types* of mystical experiences and are better associated with the third thesis:

3. Types of mystical experiences are the same across traditions, but the reports differ.

The third thesis admits a number of phenomenologically distinct *types* of experiences, as well as differences between reports. Although Katz considers the thesis superior to the first two, he deems it unsatisfactory because there is insufficient recognition of experiential differences. Representatives include Stace and Zaehner.

Katz intends to move beyond the third thesis by claiming that experiences as well as reports vary significantly across traditions. Cross-tradition typology is rejected in favour of *tradition-specific typology*. Katz also recognizes the possibility of experiential variations within traditions, and so his *pluralistic thesis*, as it could be termed, can be summarized thus:

4. Types of mystical experiences and reports of the experiences are specific to traditions and sub-traditions.

The Jewish mystic has a Jewish mystical experience, the Buddhist mystic a Buddhist mystical experience, and the Christian mystic a Christian mystical experience. Katz gives special attention to the religious contexts of Jewish mysticism (1978*a*: 33–6), and it is therefore apposite to note that Gershom Scholem, the pioneering scholar of Jewish mysticism, also emphasized the embeddedness of mysticism within religious traditions but in a far less radical way. Attempting to define *mysticism* (not 'mystical experience') in a manner appropriate to his speciality, Scholem had said that there is no abstract mystical religion or essential mysticism common to all religions:

> There is no mysticism as such, there is only the mysticism of a particular religious system, Christian, Islamic, Jewish mysticism and so on. (1961: 6)

According to Scholem (1961: 7–8), mysticism is a late development in the evolution of religion: it is a third-stage development, emerging

to bridge the gap between the believer and the divine, a gap that opens in the second stage with the institutionalization of religion. As in Carpenter's developmental theory of religion, Scholem's first stage is a time of spontaneous experience of the divine through the unity of nature, a 'monistic consciousness' of 'the interrelation and interdependence of things', whereas mysticism is a third-stage response to the second-stage alienation from the original, unitive condition. In other words, spontaneous extrovertive experience pre-dates religious traditions, whereas mystical systems are religion-specific, developing in response to the alienating religious phase and drawing upon the doctrinal, legal, social, and cultural resources of the alienating tradition. Mysticism is 'an historical phenomenon' that includes a great deal more than mystical experience (1961: 5). There are as many mysticisms as there are particular historical instances of religion in which mysticism has emerged. Note that Scholem does *not* assert Katz's pluralistic thesis: for Scholem, there is great diversity of mystical traditions, not necessarily a great diversity of mystical experiences across traditions. In fact, Scholem was convinced that there is some cross-tradition commonality of mystical experience, especially at the deepest level (1961: 6). He took the fundamental mystical experience to be 'amorphous', an absence of form that allows the experience to be described in many different ways across traditions (1969: 8–9). The formless experience is clothed in different ways when mystics describe and interpret it. Scholem's recognition that mystical traditions are situated in their religious and historical contexts is an appropriate insight for the scholar who, focusing on texts and mystics in an established religious tradition, is obliged to treat mysticism in context. Katz and others have gone further by extending plurality from *mysticisms* (i.e. mystical traditions) to *mystical experiences*.

THE CONTEXTUAL THESIS: MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE IS THOROUGHLY CONDITIONED BY CONTEXT

To justify the pluralistic thesis, radical contextualists take an epistemological standpoint: mystical experiences are fundamentally conditioned by the religious and cultural contexts in which they occur. The articles by Garside (1972) and Katz (1978*a*) give the impression that this 'contextual thesis' sits in the traditions of Kantian epistemology and mid-twentieth-century psychology of perception. Garside states plainly that his model is Kantian in inspiration,

for it takes experience to be the outcome of 'the synthesis of percepts and the *a priori* structures of the understanding':

> The main premiss of the model is that experience is a product of the interaction of the organism and the environment, involving both external stimuli and interpretive structures of the perceiver. (1972: 93–4)

Garside also takes note of the psychological study of perceptual set, shows a debt to Wittgenstein's discussion of language and perception, and mentions 'seeing as', the Wittgensteinian phrase that had been applied to scientific observation by the philosopher of science N. R. Hanson. In the post-war period, 'New Look' psychology had brought attention to the impact of mental set on perception, and philosophers of science such as Hanson (1958; 1969) and Thomas Kuhn (1962) took up the ideas to support their thesis that scientific observations are theory-laden.[2]

Katz was not so forthcoming about his sources, but his terminology shows that he also had some familiarity with psychological theories of perceptual construction and Kantian epistemology. He refers to 'organizing perceptual schema', 'synthetic operations of the mind', and the 'constructive conditions of consciousness' that make mystical experience possible (1978*a*: 35, 62, 63). Hence, Katz's position has been labelled *constructivism* by his arch-critic Robert Forman (1990*a*: 4–5). Katz does in fact use the language of construction to make his case, and Katz is under the impression that he is applying a sophisticated epistemology to a field of study that has previously escaped its benefits.[3] He states the 'single epistemological assumption' that has guided his thinking:

> *There are* NO *pure* (*i.e. unmediated*) *experiences*. . . . That is to say, *all* experience is processed through, organized by, and makes itself available to us in extremely complex epistemological ways. (1978*a*: 26; Katz's emphasis)

'Processed' and 'organized' are typical 'psychological construction' terms, language that is used again when Katz attacks the idea of 'the given' towards the end of his article. He claims that there is no

[2] Perovich (1985) raises Kuhn, Hanson, and Feyerabend in relation to radical contextualism. Franks Davis (1989: 148–61) discusses psychological construction.

[3] In an endnote, Katz (1978*a*: 68 n. 21) mentions *Art and Illusion* (1960) by E. H. Gombrich, whose understanding of artistic perception was informed by psychology of perception and philosophy of science. Katz denies that he was initially influenced by expressions of contemporary epistemology in such authors as Kuhn and Gombrich, but he admits the possibility of 'cultural osmosis' (see Forman 1991: 414).

evidence to support the idea of a given free from the processes of 'choosing', 'shaping', and 'receiving' (1978*a*: 59). Katz will countenance no distinction between ' "raw experience" and interpretation' (1978*a*: 30), not even for the contentless given at the heart of Stace's explanation of mystical experience.

Katz's case rests on a sweeping epistemological claim: *all* experience is fundamentally conditioned by contextual factors. Garside is more cautious: he avoids committing himself to the view that all experiences are equally conditioned. Rather, Garside (1972: 94) depicts a spectrum of conditioning, ranging from relatively uninterpreted 'gross perceptions of the physical world' through to mystical experience, which is the most 'socialized' or 'culturated' type of experience because it is farthest removed from ordinary perception. Mystical experience lacks perceptual input and so is all the more likely to be 'highly socialized'. In contrast, Katz insists that all experience is contextually shaped. He believes that his 'epistemological assumption' must be true 'because of the sorts of beings we are' (1978*a*: 26, 59). We contextually shape all our experiences because it is our nature to do so. Katz believes that there is no reason to think that mystical experience is any different from ordinary experience:

> These synthetic operations of the mind are in fact the fundamental conditions under which, and under which alone, mystical experience, as all experience, takes place. (1978*a*: 62–3)

Radical contextualist literature can give the impression that mystical experience is, in its essentials, a total construction from contextual resources. Robert Gimello's advocacy of 'essential contextuality' is unambiguous (1983: 85). Gimello claims that nothing significant would remain if the contextual contents were removed from mystical experience, just 'mere hedonic tone, a pattern of psychosomatic or neural impulse signifying nothing' (1983: 62). Whether Garside and Katz go so far is not absolutely clear, but they do attend only to contextual contributions. Because the shaping power of *context* is so strongly emphasized, I have called the general position 'radical contextualism' to distinguish it from other contextual theories. Katz expresses a preference for the 'contextualist' label (1992: 34 n. 9), but his contextualism (Model D) needs to be distinguished from contextualisms that give a substantial role to the mystical object (Model C). Radical contextualism also needs to be distinguished from other constructivisms (e.g. Kantian,

psychological, postmodern).[4] Both Katz and Garside are selective, utilizing only one part of the perceptual construction framework. They explain mystical construction exclusively in terms of acquired or contextual factors, that is, factors learned by the mystic, without properly addressing the innate cognitive or biological factors that perform the construction of experience. It is significant that innate factors create *similarities* between experiences, whilst contextual factors, being much more variable, create *differences*. In general, innate factors are far less variable than contextual factors, and so their contributions lead to similarities rather than to differences. Garside and Katz present a cut-down constructivist epistemology by emphasizing only the contextual contributions, for it is only contextual shaping that would support their pluralistic, tradition-specific view of mystical experience. Acknowledgement of substantial contributions from intrapersonal factors or a spiritual reality would work against their pluralistic case. The factors raised by contextualists are those contributions that have an intermediate number of variants, that is, factors that are neither universal nor individualistic but which occupy the middle ground created by membership of a group or sub-group. For Garside and Katz, these are the teachings that mystics absorb from their religious groups. The mystic-to-be grows up in an atmosphere permeated by 'images, concepts, symbols, ideological values, and ritual behaviour' and later by mystical teachings (Katz 1978*a*: 33).

Radical contextualists pass over the question of a transpersonal contribution. The question seems to be irrelevant to their cases because they give pre-eminence to context, and it is easy to gain the impression, rightly or wrongly, that the significant contents of mystical experience are deemed contextual in origin. Katz does appear to make a qualified concession when he warns that consideration of the 'known' cannot be left out entirely, but the subsequent discussion, which raises the idea of a 'dialectic' between the subject and the supposed object of the mystical experience, is opaque to say the least (1978*a*: 64–5). However, it is probably fair to conclude that Katz takes an agnostic position. He leaves open the question of a spiritual reality and treats the transpersonal contribution, if there is one, as something that can be safely ignored.

[4] Forgie (1985) and Perovich (1990) recognize that radical contextualist epistemology departs significantly from Kantianism.

SOME GENERAL CRITICISMS

The contextualist case, as presented by Garside and Katz, can be and has been criticized on several grounds. It is far from clear that perceptual experience is as heavily conditioned by contextual factors as Katz makes out. Contemporary discussions in the psychological literature suggest that the impact of contextual factors on sensory perception may have been exaggerated in the past. Katz's strong claim reflects the high estimation given to the power of conditioning by revisionist philosophers of science, who argued for the theory-ladenness of observation. In contrast, some contemporary psychologists and philosophers of science have argued that perceptual experience has considerable independence from high-level cognitions, such as theories and beliefs. Conceptual conditioning of perception may well be inescapable, but it is argued that the power of theories and beliefs to condition perception has firm limits, set by low-level cognitive or neurophysiological structures. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between different *levels of constructive interpretation*. The lowest level is purely conceptual, an unconscious discrimination of groups of sensory stimuli into object-concepts, which themselves serve to guide perceptual attention. A higher level of construction is based on unconscious inferences working on a reservoir of stored experience. The highest levels of interpretation are driven by consciously held theories, beliefs, and world-views. It seems that high-level interpretation has only limited power to override low-level interpretation. The sun appears to rise over the horizon at dawn even if one subscribes to the modern belief in the earth's daily rotation.[5] For example, suggestions of this type have been made by Hooker (1973) and by Lane and Lane:

> We believe that philosophers like Feyerabend, Hanson and Kuhn have argued for theory-laden perception because they have failed to recognise the distinction between simple category systems and more complex hypothetical systems like scientific theories. (Lane and Lane 1981: 54)

The argument has been prominent in the well-known modularity–plasticity debate between Jerry Fodor and Paul Churchland, which has stimulated further discussions (see, for instance, Estany 2001). The debate is complex, but the fact that it has taken place underscores the point that the classic psychological evidence for the

[5] For the claim that sunrise will be perceived by Tycho Brahe (geostatic believer) and horizon-dip by Kepler (heliostatic believer), see Hanson (1958).

powerful influence of high-level cognition on perception needs to be treated with caution. Recourse to claims about the interpretation-ladenness of perceptual experience in order to argue for the shaping of mystical experience should be treated with equal caution. Garside's line of argument is superior because it recognizes levels of interpretation and does not assume that ordinary perception is heavily conditioned.

Both Katz and Garside pay no attention to innate biological and psychological factors. If Katz were to be consistent with his extrapolation from ordinary perceptual construction to mystical construction, he should have allowed for innate contributions too. But Katz, of course, is pressing for his pluralistic account of mystical experience, and it is varied cultural and doctrinal contexts that provide theoretical justification for differences. Innate factors, such as intrinsic cognitive and linguistic structures, Kantian categories, Freudian infantile ideation, and the more universal, less racial contents of the Jungian collective unconscious, would yield cross-tradition similarities.

Even if ordinary perceptual experience were heavily conditioned by context, it does not follow that the same must be true of all experiences. It is risky to extend an epistemological model developed from a consideration of routine, perceptual experience to experiences that are notably different from the ordinary. Even Hanson envisaged non-ordinary perceptual experiences in which the grip of interpretative conditioning is relaxed. He supposed that novel experiences at the cutting edge of scientific research escape conceptual organization because there is as yet no theoretical framework to mould perceptions. Hanson wished to encourage a condition of perceptual fluidity in research science and advocated 'phenomenal observation': the researcher temporarily becomes 'a good laboratory camera' that records everything, like the stereotypically observant child who has fewer preconceptions and a wider field of seeing and questioning than the adult.[6] Only then does research generate the more familiar, effortless, narrowly focused, theory-laden 'seeing as' associated with an established understanding of the phenomena (1969: 150–2). Thus, Hanson identified a weakening of perceptual theory-ladenness in crucial encounters with the novel, a leap into the unknown that is to be deliberately accentuated through temporary

[6] Cf. Katz on the camera analogy (1978*a*: 60), and Garside on the child comparison (1972: 95).

periods of phenomenal observation. Hanson's perceptual shifts hinge on creative moments of perception that challenge the existing conceptual organization of experience. The same has been claimed for mystical experiences by deconstructivists, as we shall see below. The experiences stand out epistemologically for these theorists because they credit them with some freedom from conditioning beliefs and, sometimes, with access to knowledge at levels inaccessible to sensory perception. According to this view, sense-experience and sense-derived knowledge are conditioned by the perceptual process, but some other experiences and forms of knowledge are not.

Katz, like Garside, gives no real indication of the processes by which acquired material is constructed into mystical experience. Although it would be unreasonable to expect a detailed account in the light of the uncertainties over ordinary perceptual construction, the omission of any discussion is unfortunate. Acquired factors in themselves are insufficient to explain the *construction* of experience. Innate mental processes are a prerequisite for the synthesis of acquired elements into a new experience, and the activity of innate processes means that the constructed experience, including its form and contents, may not be explicable in terms of acquired factors alone.

It is notable that Garside and Katz develop their arguments without drawing on the evidence of mystical *experience*. Katz repeatedly declares that he will provide, or has provided, evidence to support his claims, and he believes that his epistemological assumption is confirmed by the facts: 'The logic of experience requires the adoption of this account and the evidence supports it' (1978*a*: 35). Yet Katz's evidence is never more than comparative doctrine, second-order and third-order writings, even though he believes that he is presenting the 'data of mystical experience' to support his case. The primary evidence he provides is the divergent *teachings* on the ultimate mystical state to be found in the various religions: Jewish *devekut* ('adhesion'), Buddhist *nirvāṇa*, and Christian non-absorptive and absorptive mystical states. The closest Katz comes to a consideration of first-order mystical writings is the statement that 'all Jewish mystical testimonies conform' to the doctrinal pattern of *devekut*, but no attempt is made to present and discuss the data or indeed justify the claim. Yet Katz believes that he has provided sufficient 'empirical evidence' to back up his view that mystical experience is "'over-determined'' by its socio-religious milieu' (1978*a*: 46). There is something amiss in the procedure: it is asserted

that mystical and religious doctrines shape experience, but the evidence offered is not accounts in which the shaping of experience shows through clearly but the diversity of doctrines and practices across traditions (see Forman 1990*a*: 15–16). Doctrines are cited as evidence for the influence of doctrines. If circularity is to be avoided, first-order writings should be used.

THE EXTROVERTIVE CHALLENGE

Extrovertive mystical experience raises some problems for radical contextualism. In the first place, radical contextualism portrays mystical experience as embedded in conditioning traditions of belief and practice. We have seen that some religious traditions do have practices that seem to encourage the experiences (e.g. Zen), and that some experiences have taken place after recent exposure to appropriate literature (e.g. Romantic poetry, the *Bhagavad Gītā*). However, many cases are situated *outside traditions of doctrine and practice*, occurring under a variety of non-religious circumstances. Since there is no facilitation by a religious tradition in these cases, the contextualist would have to broaden the meaning of 'tradition' to include the general intellectual and cultural background. However, the contextualist argument, as it stands, calls not only upon beliefs but also on rigorous training. Mystics are 'trained' to have certain kinds of mystical experiences. Unless the mystics-to-be are saturated with appropriate beliefs and engage in reinforcing practices, they will not have the experiences. If ideas and beliefs alone were sufficient, the experiences would be extremely common. To preserve their position, radical contextualists would have to allow mystical experiences to follow from low levels of conditioning and no special training, but they would then have to explain why the experiences are not everyday occurrences.

A possible problem for radical contextualism is the occurrence of *similar experiences across very different contexts*. According to radical contextualists, mystical experiences shaped by contrasting intellectual, cultural, and historical contexts should be notably different. This is not an easy matter to explore, given the shortage of detailed extrovertive accounts from cultures and historical periods outside the modern world. However, examination of the historical literature may raise informative cases, and cross-cultural comparisons may be possible. There are, for instance, notable similarities between Derek Gibson's spontaneous extrovertive experience (late 1960s, England)

and the clairvoyant-mystical experiences reported by Yogananda (early twentieth century, India), induced by his gurus. The visual penetration and expansion described in these cases, associated with a special luminosity, are comparable to instances from very different contexts. For Iglulik shamans, an inner luminosity could bring a feeling of ascension, clairvoyance, and precognition (e.g. Eliade 1965: 22–4), a combination also experienced by the medieval Christian mystic Hildegard of Bingen. Buddhist meditative teachings recognize a luminous state of mind from which various supernormal phenomena can arise, including the luminosity and all-seeing vision of the 'heavenly eye' (e.g. Conze 1959: 133; Harvey 1995: 173–4).

Another problem for radical contextualism is *disparity* between experience and context. If mystical experiences are simply constructions from acquired ideas, they should agree with those ideas. For radical contextualists, mystical experiences are essentially conservative, reflecting and reaffirming the doctrinal status quo (Katz 1983*a*). However, it is notable that extrovertive experience can be so out of step with prior understanding that it leads to major intellectual and emotional turnarounds. For instance, we noted in Chapter 3 that Muz Murray's worldview was severely challenged when he had his three minutes of expanded consciousness.

If radical contextualism is valid, the contents and characteristics of mystical experiences should be traceable to the intellectual, cultural, and historical contexts in which the experiences occur. *Novelty* is a problem for radical contextualism because the experiences are sometimes unprecedented in the subject's outlook. In many cases, subjects had no background knowledge of mysticism, and so their experiences had no mystical precedents on which to base themselves. For example, a schoolboy experienced the world as the 'mine' of an 'I' that was no longer the 'familiar ego', a realization that could not be placed in a familiar framework:

> The event made a very deep impression on me at the time; but, because it did not fit into any of the thought patterns—religious, philosophical, scientific—with which, as a boy of fifteen, I was familiar, it came to seem more and more anomalous, more and more irrelevant to 'real life', and was finally almost forgotten. (Isherwood 1954: 98)

Zaehner gives an example of extrovertive experience that shows considerable novelty and therefore little evidence of grounding in contextual resources. The account, sent to him by Dorothea Spinney, describes an experience that began with a translucent,

blue-white mist accompanied by peace and joy. It deepened until Spinney, as 'all consciousness', felt united with the spatio-temporal totality. Spinney's intellectual background is not described, but she does indicate her prior lack of knowledge of mystical experience:

> One can hardly describe an experience in which one is caught up into—what? Something I had never read of, meditated on, or knew existed—as an unborn child couldn't realize a description of this world. (Zaehner 1958: 50)

Zaehner was impressed that 'a lady in the twentieth century in England' who had no previous familiarity with the condition should come up spontaneously with ideas and terminology anticipated by the *Upaniṣads*. In general, Zaehner rejected contextualist ideas: the 'theory . . . that sectarian dogma necessarily modifies the actual nature of the mystic's experience' is a 'half-truth' refuted by historical fact (1957: 205). However, Zaehner made an exception for the despised Huxley, whose mescaline experience may have been affected by 'Vedāntin and Mahāyāna Buddhist ideas' that permeated his mind at the time (1957: 3).

Several scholars have pointed out that novelty and disparity challenge contextualism. Robert Forman brings up novel experiences (1990*a*: 19–21), and Caroline Franks Davis raises experiences unrelated to or at odds with tradition (1989: 162–3). Franks Davis is rightly impressed by childhood experiences that exhibit no connection with the religious education of the children, and she summarizes some relevant observations from Edward Robinson's study of childhood experiences, *The Original Vision* (1977):

> Some had had no religious training before the experience; many were familiar with some religious concepts but not with the ones they later said the experience had revealed; and many did not connect their 'Sunday School' religious concepts with their experiences, because those concepts were far too inadequate and naïve. Some even had two 'Gods', one for church, the other the object of their numinous and mystical experiences. (Franks Davis 1989: 163)

Franks Davis takes the reports of childhood experiences as clear evidence that 'religious experiences do not depend entirely on the subject's conceptual set' (1989: 163). Her point is certainly appropriate for extrovertive experiences: unlike, say, meetings with God, angels, fairies, or deceased relatives, children's extrovertive experiences have few acquired ideas on which to draw for inspiration.

Extrovertive experiences of the very young are strong evidence that something other than contextual factors are at work.

When an experience agrees with its contextual resources, there can still be a hurdle for radical contextualism. The experience neither contradicts its context (disparity) nor departs from it by introducing new elements (novelty) but is in *excess* of what should be expected. There is an inequality: the teachings are felt to be pale reflections of the reality they indicate. The mystic understands the appropriateness of the teachings but sees how feeble they are compared with the experiential actuality. For example, when Robert Wolf took morning glory seeds, he had some idea of what to expect from his prior reading, but the character of the tremendous self-expansion that followed was unexpected (Merkur 1998: 105–6). He could appreciate that others had hinted at the experience in their writings, but found that it really defied description. Now if Wolf's experience had been fashioned from previous readings of psychedelic and mystical accounts, there is no reason why it should have exceeded those descriptions, which were discovered to be mere 'hints'. Something else must have contributed significantly to the experience. Wolf's remarks also point to another problem for radical contextualism: *difficulty of expression*. Mystical experiences should be as expressible as ordinary waking and dreaming experiences if they are merely reworkings of familiar ideas and images. Subjects should have no difficulty describing their experiences to others who share a similar religious and cultural background.

Finally, some general characteristics of extrovertive experience cast doubt on the contextual thesis. Although some visionary and noetic contents may draw upon prior learning, many of the characteristics outlined in Chapter 2 must depend on something other than contextual contributions. Even if subjects had previously known that mystical experiences bring unitive feelings, luminous transfigurations, 'time standing still', and all-inclusive love, there would still be *a gap to cross* from the abstract knowledge to the experiential actuality. For instance, the mystic-to-be may have been taught that a bright light manifests in mystical experience, but the acquired knowledge can be actualized only if there is something capable of bringing about the extraordinary brightness. It is not enough to tell someone that they should experience a light that suffuses the world: there must already be a potential for the actualization of the luminosity through some innate biopsychological or transpersonal basis.

THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CONTEXT

Although radical contextualism has been found wanting in its application to extrovertive experience, there is still room for more moderate epistemologies that supplement contextual influences with contributions from other sources, intrapersonal and transpersonal. The view that mystical experiences may contain material derived from the subject's intellectual, social, and cultural environments can be accepted without taking the strong view that the experiences are wholly or largely shaped by context. Undoubtedly, extrovertive experiences do occur within intellectual and cultural contexts. Most subjects, except the youngest, will have absorbed ideas about the nature and structure of the world prevalent in their cultures.

It would be uncontroversial to claim that intellectual and cultural contexts exert an influence on issues outside the extrovertive experience per se, that is, on attendant issues such as circumstances, description, retrospective interpretation, communication, and aftereffects. The Romantic movement probably encouraged the experiences in recent times by presenting nature in a positive light, as a suitable location for recreation, relaxation, and spiritual recuperation. A relaxed state of mind in natural surroundings is often a facilitative circumstance. If nature were avoided as a place of danger and ugliness, then its facilitation of experiences would be compromised. It is also not difficult to see that cultural resources will affect the way in which an experience is described and interpreted, supplying words and ideas that aid description and comprehension. The cultural milieu is also likely to affect disclosure: subjects of non-ordinary experiences are often reluctant to share their experiences. In contemporary Western society, the disclosure of extrovertive experience is probably less likely to draw negative responses than some other types of experiences, such as voices, spirit possession, and alien abduction. Responses will depend on attitudes prevalent in the cultural milieu, which may be dismissive, diagnosing pathology and hallucination, or encouraging, offering venerated precedents and models. Thus, with regard to 'awareness of a sacred presence in nature', Hay and Heald claim that the Romantic tradition has given 'permission to the religious intellectual, and nature mysticism is not uncommonly reported by university graduates' (1987: 21).

Religious, cultural, and social groups in which nature is accorded heightened aesthetic or spiritual value may be particularly

supportive to admissions of extrovertive experience, such as Christian creation-centred spirituality, neo-Paganism, pantheist movements, ecological activism, and some Far Eastern imports, notably Zen Buddhism and Taoism. These contexts may not only provide supportive environments for the disclosure of experiences but also facilitate the experiences in the first place, by encouraging appropriate meditative practices or exposure to natural surroundings. Empirical work on the incidence and disclosure of extrovertive experiences amongst different groups could be usefully undertaken. Finally, cultural factors may influence the subject's ability to integrate an experience by giving some understanding of what it is and how to respond to it (e.g. Thomas 1997).

But what about the mystical experience itself, the experiential core? Radical contextualists claim that it is contextually shaped. There is evidence that intellectual and cultural resources do contribute to the contents of some experiences, especially the phantasmagoric visions common in drug-induced states. Although of possible interest and importance for their symbolic contents, these experiences, like dreams, cannot be regarded as direct presentations of reality, for the incorporation of contextual material is often obvious. Disputing Timothy Leary's claim that psychedelic experiences give access to truths uncovered by science, Masters and Houston suggest an alternative explanation (1973: 303–6). Bombarded with scientific information by the media, the mind absorbs and stores the information, and reproduces it under certain conditions. Unlocked by drugs, mythopoeic imagination weaves an understanding of the world from scientific knowledge, the resource most congenial to the modern mind:

> Cosmological mysticism would appear to be the mythic and empathic apprehension of the world, often scientifically conceptualized by virtue of the subject's normal or subliminal familiarity with the terms and 'sacred hypotheses' of the new science. (1973: 306)

If extrovertive experiences do contain culturally sourced information, it would show most clearly in the noetic and visionary contents. For instance, an account filled with commonplace scientific realizations most likely draws on contextual resources, in the construction of the experience itself or in post-experience interpretation and elaboration. A mystical vision of atomic or molecular structure that mirrors depictions in popular literature would almost certainly depend on contextual construction, for the images are iconic, highly

stylized images unreflective of the physical and mathematical details. Similarly, the close reproduction of contemporary cosmology in modern-day 'flight of the soul' testimonies most likely depends on contextual contributions, in the construction of the experience or in the retrospective interpretation. Like ancient and medieval tales of celestial journeys, modern cosmic visionary accounts can mirror the latest cosmology. For example, in his account of a near-death experience, Mellen-Thomas Benedict describes encounters with the galactic centre, superclusters, and the multiverse of universes created by numerous Big Bangs (1996: 39–52). Several explanations are possible for experiences of this kind. First, the subject really experienced the universe and drew on modern cosmological ideas to interpret the vision, appropriately or inappropriately (Model A). Second, the experience was simply an imaginative construction based on cosmological ideas absorbed by the subject (Model D). Third, the experience drew on culturally available scientific ideas and images, but these served a mediating, symbolic function, expressing inner, psychic conditions or even transpersonal actualities (Model C). Just as a Jungian may claim that a dream image of the Pope (cultural figure) stands for the archetype of the Self (transcultural actuality), so it may be claimed that culturally acquired scientific images in some mystical visions have a transcultural reference, pointing to innate or transpersonal conditions. The suggestion is, of course, merely speculative, but it does make the point that the presence of culture-specific material in a mystical experience, such as a religious personage or a scientific icon, is not in itself conclusive evidence that the experience is a purely contextual affair.

Not all insights into cosmic or microscopic structure show signs of contextual shaping or interpretative imposition. Some accounts of mystical and near-death experience depart from commonplace scientific understandings of the world in interesting ways or describe realizations that are novel for the subject. To take one simple example, the 8-year-old girl who had insights into geological structures and processes found that her experience took her beyond her previous understanding:

> I was aware while I was experiencing this that I had previously considered symmetry and symmetrical forms the most perfect and special, but now I saw others which were more important, spirals (helical? shapes) and other patterns more like waves (or waves in place, the way wind affects a wheat field), and the fact that this pattern or this reality derived its energy from asymmetry. (RERC 2366, in Maxwell and Tschudin 1996: 50)

Rather than prejudge the matter, it is necessary to look at each case individually for contents that can be traced to the cultural context (e.g. stock scientific ideas and images) and for contents that go beyond context (e.g. novelty, disparity) and therefore derive from some other source.

Deconstruction and 'Nondual Awareness'

According to deconstructivists, mystical experiences arise through a deconditioning of ordinary experience. The flow of experience is ordinarily subject to discriminations that change the character of the flow, elevating some parts to the centre of attention and emotional interest, demoting others to a background presence or to unconsciousness. Habitual patterns of attention, conceptual categories, ideas, beliefs, and evaluatory judgements ordinarily condition the flow. The most powerful structuring discriminations depend on the distinction between 'self' and 'other', which organizes experience conceptually and emotionally around a self and its relation to other selves and objects. The result, it is alleged, is a distorted perception of the world, which is divided into overly discrete and incorrectly valued items. Deconstructive theories have promise because they provide an uncomplicated explanation of some extrovertive characteristics. Some feelings of unity and some changes to self-experience can be attributed to a partial or thoroughgoing deconditioning of experience, that is, a relaxation of discriminative thoughts and discriminatory evaluations. They are also appealing because they can shed light on a variety of circumstances in which extrovertive experience occurs. Anything that disrupts or dissolves ordinary self–other discriminations and evaluations could in principle initiate the experiences: absorption in beauty, relaxation, meditative calmness, thought-interruption techniques, meditations on unifying ideas, feelings of love and concern, intense sensations, sex, shocks and trauma, chemical assaults on the brain, and so forth.

Modern deconstructive theories have derived impetus from a variety of sources, including Western mystical thought, the idealist-Romantic fascination with the subject–object relation, Asian nondual philosophies, and, from the mid-twentieth century, mainstream psychology of attention and cognition. Edward Carpenter's discussion of non-differentiation and the practice of thought inhibition is an early example, drawing on traditional Western mystics,

Romanticism, idealism, and Hindu philosophy. Arthur Deikman's *deautomatization* theory of meditative and mystical experience represents a later generation of theorizing, incorporating psychological theory of habitual attention. Deikman describes automatization as 'a basic process in which the repeated exercise of an action or of a perception results in the disappearance from consciousness of its intermediate steps', whilst deautomatization is an 'undoing' of automatization, 'presumably by reinvestment of actions and percepts with attention' (1963: 330). Meditative or mystical experience ensues when habitual inattention is overcome by a re-exercise or 'reinvestment' of attention. The effect is not a *suspension* of attention but a *shift* of attention, that is, a reinvestment of attention in details previously unnoticed or excluded. Reorganization takes place, rather than unmitigated disorganization, a theory that allows Deikman to distinguish his approach from psychoanalytic explanations that take the mystical experience to be a mere 'regression to the early infant–mother symbiotic relationship' (1966*a*: 328). Richard Jones (1986; 1993; 2000), drawing on Deikman's theory, has also raised deconstruction to explain content-rich mystical experiences ('nature-mystical' or 'mindfulness' experiences). Awareness is freed from 'the dominance of habitual anticipations and categorizations', and a partial 'release from our conceptual cocoon' becomes possible (1986: 44).

As Wulff (1997: 502) has noted, an earlier theorist who addressed mystical experience along similar lines to Deikman was Henry Nelson Wieman (1884–1975). According to Wieman, habitual selective attention breaks down under the impact of appropriate stimuli, such as bewilderment, disappointment, awe at the wonders of nature, love, profound discussion, group excitement, or silent repose, yielding a 'diffusive awareness', an 'undirected, unselective aliveness of the total organism to the total event' ((1926) 1970: 37–9). Whereas Stace was to understand the mystical core as pure consciousness devoid of sensory, affective, and intellectual content, Wieman took the core to be pure sense-data devoid of cognition. For Wieman, mystical and religious experiences are essentially sensory, although the full experiences involve interpretations that seek to elicit the profound meaning of the experiences. Wieman's privileging of sensuous experience as the mystical core reflects his overall thesis that God, like any object, must be known through ordinary channels of knowledge acquisition, that is, through the presentation of sensory data followed by interpretation, rather than by means of some

special spiritual faculty. The enhancement of these ordinary channels constitutes the scientific method, which, turned towards religious experience, is the way to gain knowledge of God. Drawing on his own transformative experience in 1916, Wieman was to talk of the 'breakdown' of the mind's 'protective devices' that shield it from disturbing experiences, and the attendant or subsequent 'reorganization' of the mind that brings integration and an openness to whole experience (1959: 21–2). He detected similar ideas expressed by D. T. Suzuki on Zen 'satori', Martin Buber on the 'I–thou' experience, and Karl Jaspers on awareness of 'the Comprehensive', whilst recognizing their different metaphysical positions.

The idea that discriminative operations give rise to misleading understandings of the experiential flow has significant antecedents in Asian religious philosophies that advocate *nondual awareness of the world*, that is, awareness unclouded by the conceptual and evaluatory impositions of subject–object, self–other, or knower–known dualities (see Loy 1988). Such ideas go back at least as far as the Taoist work *Chuang-tzu* (fourth century BCE), but special mention should be made of the Buddhist Yogācāra school (from fourth century CE). According to Yogācāra philosophy, the stream of experience is ordinarily subject to various types of discriminations (*vikalpa*) that impose divisive conceptualizations (see Willis 1979; Griffiths 1990: 86). Yogācāra nondualism has influenced present-day understanding of nondual awareness, in scholarly discussions and in more popular contexts through its assimilation into Ch'an (Zen) and tantric forms of Buddhism, and through its influence on Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedānta. The view that 'dualistic' thinking is a barrier to apprehending the nature of things has become a truism amongst modern-day proponents of Eastern wisdom, although the idea can lead in different directions, depending on the understanding of 'nonduality'. 'Nondual' (*advaita*) is not necessarily applied to content-rich experiences. Indeed, the best-known example of *advaita* philosophy, Advaita Vedānta, is concerned primarily with (1) the nonduality of the absolute reality (*brahman*) and (2) the non-difference of this absolute and the innermost self (*ātman*). In the study of mystical experience, the Advaita Vedānta type of nonduality is liable to be transformed—shorn of its more complex philosophical and religious details—into the idea of a mystical state of 'pure consciousness' or 'pure self', such as Stace's introvertive experience and Forman's 'pure consciousness event' (PCE). Forman's 'forgetting' model of mystical experience describes a process that clears out

perceptual as well as cognitive contents, leading to pure consciousness, not to the nondual awareness of multiplicity (1990*a*: 30–43).

Whereas interest in nondual Vedānta or dualistic Sāṃkhya philosophy leads to an emphasis on the contentless pure consciousness, other philosophies, such as the Taoism of the *Chuang-tzu*, Buddhist Yogācāra, Hua-yen, Ch'an, and Dzogchen, and Hindu nondual Kashmir Śaivism, draw attention to nondual awareness in content-rich experiences. From the 1950s, Ch'an Buddhism and its Japanese derivative Zen gained popularity in the West, and, along with other spiritual traditions, provided psychologically oriented theorists with counterparts to their speculations on the organization of ordinary experience and its transformation in meditative and mystical states. Scientific investigators of altered states of consciousness, notably Deikman, Robert Ornstein, and Charles Tart, made use of contemporary psychological ideas and discussed the constructive processes using such terms as 'selective attention', 'automatization', 'habituation', and 'categorization'. For instance, Ornstein (1971; 1973; 1986) suggested that the insights of modern psychology had been anticipated in esoteric and mystical thought, and he found ideas comparable to psychological 'construction' theories in the teachings of Sufism, Gurdjieff, Yoga, and Zen.

There is some irony in the fact that radical contextualists, such as Garside and Katz, were influenced by the same atmosphere of psychological theory and research that had inspired Deikman, Ornstein, Tart, and others. Both groups took up the view that ordinary experience is concept-laden and 'constructed' but reached opposite conclusions about mystical experience. Deconstructivists such as Deikman claimed that mystical experiences involve a shift to a less conditioned state, a deconditioning or a partial reconditioning of experience that brings novel insights. A little later, in the 1970s, contextualists claimed that mystical experience is as conceptually structured as ordinary experience and probably much more so. Thus, Garside drew on Deikman's theory of reconditioning to argue that mystical experiences are better viewed as 'culturated' experiences than regressions to a primitive mode of perception (1972: 94–6), and Katz was to claim that yoga 'is *not* an *un*conditioning or *de*conditioning of consciousness, but rather it is a *re*conditioning of consciousness' (1978*a*: 57). The reconditioning of Garside and Katz merely substitutes one contextually conditioned consciousness for another, whereas Deikman's reconditioning brings new discoveries in the experiential flow.

Whilst 'deconstruction' ideas continued to have a presence in consciousness research and transpersonal psychology, radical contextualism took centre stage in religious studies. However, deconstructivist critiques of contextualist epistemology soon emerged. Most attention was given to the deconstruction that clears the way for contentless 'pure consciousness'. Less attention has been given to the deconstruction that leads to content-rich, nondual experiences, that is, to experience in which the subject–object distinction no longer dominates the experience of contents. The distinction between pure consciousness and nondual awareness has been well summarized by Paul Griffiths (1990), who distinguishes propositions that are liable to be confused in discussions of pure consciousness.[7] The following two theses encapsulate the distinction:

Pure consciousness thesis. It is logically possible that there occur a mental event with no phenomenological attributes and no content. (1990: 75)

Nondualistic consciousness thesis. For any experience (*E*) it is possible that *E*'s phenomenological attributes and content not include any structural opposition between subject and object, apprehender and apprehended. (1990: 77)

Griffiths claims that the pure consciousness thesis had only a limited, ambiguous presence in Indian Buddhist philosophy, whilst the nondualistic consciousness thesis was well represented in the concept of 'unconstructed awareness' (*nirvikalpa jñāna*), which gained prominence in Yogācāra Buddhism and was given high soteriological value there.

Griffiths is not the only scholar to highlight the significance of Buddhist notions of unconstructed, content-rich awareness for the contextualist debate. Sallie King (1988) has put forward a 'Buddhist-phenomenological epistemological model' that draws on Yogācāra philosophy as an alternative to contextualist epistemology.[8] King suggests that the flow of experience reverts to a 'primitive' mode with the elimination of subject–object conceptualizations. She supposes that in the primitive mode, which is encouraged by meditation but also occurs in secular contexts, it is quite possible for linguistic functions to be turned off and for 'ideas, concepts, words,

[7] Also Rothberg (1990: 164): there are two 'modes of mystical experience' that 'constructivists' cannot explain, 'experience of pure consciousness' and a 'progressive deconstruction of the structures of ordinary experience' in meditation.

[8] Richard King (1999: 175–82) raises some additional Indian epistemologies to illustrate alternatives to the radical contextualist epistemology.

philosophies and religious traditions' to have no influence (1988: 277). King remarks that her model can be taken phenomenologically and therefore requires no commitment to the revelation of a 'true reality' in mystical experience: 'metaphysical claims' about spiritual contributions to mystical experience can be bracketed. She explains that some mystical characteristics may follow directly from the dropping of the subject–object construction: with experiencer and experienced no longer conceptually separated, there will be subject–object unity (1988: 272–3). The removal of subject–object separation also gives rise to the 'immediacy, directness or vividness' of mystical experience.

Sallie King's approach raises some important issues. Her bracketing of metaphysical claims shows that deconstructivism can be pursued in an agnostic or naturalistic way. In King's treatment, the question of a transpersonal dimension is left open. Richard Jones treats the deconstructed stream of experience as a purely subjective affair: it is the phenomenal stream supplied by the individual's senses. Neurological, cultural, and linguistic processes work on the stream to shape ordinary experience. In nature-mystical experience, there is no change to the range of stimuli, just a 'Gestalt-like switch' in the awareness of data, a switch that can uncover new facts in the existing data (1986: 46–7). Deikman initially thought that there was no need to call upon transpersonal contributions (1966*a*, *b*), but he subsequently gave increasing weight to the possibility (e.g. 1982).

King's attempt to trace mystical characteristics to the deconstruction of ordinary experience raises the question whether extrovertive characteristics can be adequately explained in this way. It seems reasonable to follow King by supposing that the abatement of sharp subject–object constructions can lead to unitive experience of the world. The stream of perceptual experience is appreciated as a whole (integral unity), rather than as a collection of separate parts, a whole in which the empirical self is just another part (immersive unity). The quietening of distracting thoughts leads to a reinvestment of attention in sensory contents, bringing to perception a 'realness', vividness, clarity, a greater awareness of form and colour. The diminution of the self-orientation also encourages feelings of peace and joy, for excessive ego-centred thinking tends to work in the opposite direction.

However, the deconstruction of ordinary experience does not in itself explain some important extrovertive features. It is not at all

obvious why reduction of self–other discriminations or a 'Gestalt-like' switch of awareness in the phenomenal stream should bring a sense of all-inclusive knowledge, a deep sense of meaning, specific insights, world-encompassing love, temporal inclusivity, special luminosities, vastly expanded vision, the auditory 'hush', a sense of presence, somatic phenomena, and some deeper aspects of unity (communal, interconnective, source unities). Deconstructivism sheds light on the antecedent circumstances of extrovertive experience by pointing to an initial deconditioning, but it is not very useful for explaining the characteristics of the experiences, other than simple cases of unity, heightened awareness, and peace. For this, we need a more comprehensive theory that goes on to explain the full range of features. Deconstruction seems to cleanse the 'doors of perception', but something other than the purified phenomenal stream must come into play. We have already seen that we cannot simply turn to contextual reconditioning as the solution because it also fails to account for many general characteristics, and it is seriously undermined by cases of novelty and context-disparity. To find the missing ingredients, we may have to look to intrapersonal psychology and biology, and even to transpersonal contributions.

7
On the Couch, in the Lab

Pathology, Psychoanalysis, Neuroscience

If neither religious and cultural indoctrination nor a simple deconstruction of experience is sufficient to account for the range of extrovertive mystical characteristics, then other factors need to be explored. At the least, attention should be given to the innate psychological and biological processes that support experience, for these may contribute to mystical experience in non-trivial ways, yielding, for instance, the altered luminosity, temporality, and self-experience that contextualism alone poorly addresses. Intrapersonal contributions, psychological and biological, may introduce rather more to the experiences than Gimello's incidental 'hedonic tone'. Because innate biological and psychological factors are universal, they can be called upon to address problems faced by radical contextualism, such as cross-cultural similarities, novelty, disparity, excess, and the experiences of young, minimally enculturated children.

In the present chapter, the focus therefore turns to naturalistic explanations that put great weight on the functioning or malfunctioning of the brain and mind. The least sophisticated understandings simply dismiss mystical experiences as symptoms of a diseased brain, without further elaboration. The experiences can also receive crude treatment in psychiatric works if mystical phenomena are indiscriminately bundled together with psychopathological symptoms.[1] Then there are the explanations that invoke some unflattering

[1] Descriptive psychopathologies in the phenomenological tradition of Karl Jaspers aim at detailed description and categorization rather than explanation. However, the inclusion of mystical phenomena in a psychiatric taxonomy can imply psychopathology. Unitive experience may be portrayed not only as a departure from ordinary experience but as a *disorder* of ordinary experience. For instance, Kräupl Taylor (1979) places experiences of identity with the world amongst the 'disorders of perception', more specifically the 'disorders of the body image'. Jaspers himself bundles together various disorders of 'awareness of self as distinct from the outer world', juxtaposing unitive merger and schizophrenic thought-broadcasting, despite the obvious phenomenological differences (1963: 126–7). Sims adopts Jaspers's classification

physiological or psychological mechanism, sexual or otherwise, to explain the origins of the experiences. It was this kind of genetic reductionism, exemplified by Henry Maudsley's pathologizing of the supernatural, that William James rejected as 'medical materialism', whilst acknowledging that some conditions described in psychiatric textbooks are pathological inversions of mysticism ((1902) 1985: 19, 426).

It is true that mystical experiences sometimes do have a connection with disturbed states of mind. For instance, we have seen that extrovertive experiences sometimes occur at times of great mental tension, sometimes involve grandiose misidentifications, and sometimes leave subjects in a depressed condition. Difficulties can range from slight, temporary disorientation, through spiritual emergencies in which subjects maintain some critical perspective, to full-blown psychoses in which subjects lose touch with everyday, consensual reality. Euphoric feelings of unity, meaning, and self-loss can turn into distressing psychoses that exhibit the pathological inversion of mysticism noted by James (see Chadwick 1997: 177–8; 2001: 86–9). In addition, it seems that mystical teachings and practices can sometimes exacerbate underlying psychological problems and even precipitate mental illness in those who are susceptible (e.g. Greenberg, Witztum, and Buchbinder 1992). Yet the negative circumstances, characteristics, or immediate consequences of some mystical experiences do not necessarily mean that the experiences have no value in the long run or that they provide no contact with deeper levels of reality, and it is important to remember that mystical experiences are often unaccompanied by signs of pathology. The relation between mystical experience and mental illness has received some attention from scholars who neither indulge in simplistic identifications nor separate the two completely in an attempt to defend mysticism against its pathologizing detractors. For example, David Lukoff has suggested criteria for distinguishing between outright psychoses and genuine mystical experiences with psychotic features.

but recognizes differences between schizophrenic and ecstatic experiences (1988: 161). Ecstatic experiences are *as if* experiences, with no 'psychotic' impairment of reality judgement. Sims avoids pathologizing, but the 'as if' characterization is not convincing. Mystics do not merely play with the idea of changing self-boundaries: the change comes upon them as an inescapable reality. For Reed (1988: 112–33), ego-boundary blurring is not pathological per se: it is an everyday phenomenon that occurs along a continuum. When it takes place in religious settings, the blurring is subject to *cognitive labelling*: subjects give it a mystical interpretation and then invest it with the expected bliss or tranquillity (1988: 118).

Failure to make the distinction can lead to heavy-handed psychiatric interventions that are counter-productive or even destructive if the mystical experience has a healing or growth-inducing function (Lukoff 1985; 1996; see also Grof and Grof 1991; Nelson 1994; Clarke 2001).

R. C. Zaehner was not one of these more sophisticated scholars: he took a pathologizing attitude towards extrovertive mystical experience, equating it with the mania of bipolar (manic-depressive) illness. However, he also tried out a psychoanalytic regression theory, and, after some transpersonal speculations about a mindless force in nature, he ended up with a purely psychological theory that lends itself to development in cognitive directions. Psychoanalysis has inspired a variety of explanations of mystical experience, some very much in the tradition of 'medical materialism'. For our purposes, Freud's comments on the 'oceanic feeling' are both interesting and relevant because they specifically address extrovertive experience. Later psychoanalytic developments provide resources for more sophisticated explanations, and one theory, directed in part at the 'nature mystic' Thomas Traherne, shows how these resources could be applied to extrovertive experience. Finally, there are signs that the neuropsychological study of meditative and mystical states may become increasingly important in the future. Neuropsychological approaches are still very much in their infancy, and some current efforts show little awareness of the typological and interpretative complexities that have occupied scholars of religion. However, it is likely that neuropsychology will have some role to play in a comprehensive explanation of extrovertive experience. There are currently many uncertainties, not only in the physiological and psychological minutiae but also in the fundamentals. Does the brain *produce* experience, like an electric bulb that emits a glow, or does the brain merely *regulate* experience, like a tap that controls water flow? The neuropsychological contribution will be very different in the two cases.

Zaehner's Crusade against Nature Mysticism

Robert Charles Zaehner (1913–74), an orientalist who started out as a specialist in Zoroastrian religion, wrote his comparative study *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* (1957) in response to Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception* (1954). Huxley had likened his experiences under mescaline to the mystical experiences valued in religious

traditions, such as the Christian Beatific Vision. Zaehner's mission, pursued with combative zeal and a declared bias towards theistic mysticism, was to show that mystical experiences fall into several categories and that drug-induced mystical experiences, as a form of natural mystical experience, are distinct from and far inferior to theistic mystical experiences.

Whilst Stace and Zaehner both had a place for extrovertive experience in their cross-cultural typologies, Stace tended to merge his two types by making pure consciousness the mystical core of both. Zaehner, in contrast, generally drew a firm distinction between natural mystical experience and his other mystical types, the monistic and theistic experiences. Both authors upheld a firm spirit–nature dualism and therefore minimized the spiritual significance of extrovertive experience, Stace by treating the experience as an impure version of the world-transcending introvertive experience, Zaehner by segregating it from the highly valued theistic type. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that Zaehner's mystical typology was dominated by the imperative to fence off extrovertive experience—and therefore Huxley's 'profane' mescaline experiences—from the other, 'sacred' or 'religious' types of mystical experiences, particularly the theistic type.

THE 'LOOSE MINDED' INDIFFERENTISTS

Zaehner's typology, with its sharp distinction between the natural and religious types, was no mere academic exercise in taxonomy but formed the theoretical core of his attempt to combat Huxley. Why was Zaehner so provoked by Huxley's understanding of mysticism? There are personal and professional aspects to Zaehner's response. In 1933, whilst an undergraduate at Oxford, Zaehner had an extrovertive experience that fitted well with his atheistic outlook at the time (1957: xii–xiii). In 1946, Zaehner converted to Roman Catholicism, and from the new perspective, his earlier 'nature mystical' phase appeared intellectually and morally deficient: it had been a mistake to believe that God is simply Nature, and the experience had encouraged callousness in personal relations. Zaehner recalls that after his nature experience he felt no concern for a depressed friend who lacked the sense to see the truth as Zaehner understood it. By attacking Huxley and natural mystical experience, Zaehner was making amends for his former intellectual and moral failings.

At the professional level, it was a feature of Zaehner's approach to the study of religion that he could not abide what he considered to be the untruthful suppression of differences, whether differences between religious doctrines or between mystical experiences, for the sake of presenting a false harmony. Zaehner set himself against those he labelled 'indifferentists', the 'generous but loose minded persons who would have us believe that all religions are equally true' (1957: 199). Already in his 1953 inaugural lecture as the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford, Zaehner had made his own position very clear. He announced that as a scholar he should not be expected to 'induce harmony among elements as disparate as the great religions of mankind appear to be, if, as seems inevitable, the resultant harmony is only to be apparent, verbal, and therefore fictitious' (1970: 431).[2] Intellectually and temperamentally, Zaehner was unable to stomach the perennialist vision of underlying harmony. Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945) presented one such vision, and in Zaehner's inaugural lecture, Huxley was taken to task for depicting mysticism as a '*philosophia perennis* transcending all so-called revealed creeds' (1970: 438).

In *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* (1957), Zaehner's attack on the indifferentists became more focused, owing to a new element in Huxley's perennialism. In *The Doors of Perception* (1954), Huxley likened mescaline experiences to the mystical experiences described in religious traditions and esteemed them as a solution to contemporary ills by virtue of their power to bring self-transcendence. Zaehner disputed the truth of the comparison and deplored its implications. First, Zaehner thought he could vouch that natural mystical experiences, and therefore mescaline experiences, are very different from the mystical union described by Christian mystics. His own experience convinced him that different types of mystical experiences ought to be distinguished. Second, Zaehner believed that

[2] On Zaehner's undiplomatic declaration of intellectual independence at his inaugural lecture, see Michael Dummett's introduction to Zaehner's *The City Within the Heart* (1980). Dummett conveys a sense of Zaehner's character, life, and thought, as do Hughes (1976) and Parrinder (1976) in their memorial tributes, and Kripal (2001) in his recent discussion. During the Second World War, Zaehner was attached to the British Embassy in Tehran, engaged on counterintelligence work for MI6, and he returned to Iran in 1951 during the oil nationalization dispute. Kripal suggests that Zaehner's uncompromising search for truth in his academic life may have been a 'redemptive or compensatory act' for his 'earlier career in dissimulation and deception' (2001: 162).

natural mystical experiences, including those induced by drugs, do not encourage moral conduct because they are essentially amoral and do not inspire loving concern. Zaehner therefore objected strongly to Huxley's promotion of mescaline experience as a solution to the ills of the modern world. Third, Zaehner misrepresented Huxley by claiming that he had advocated mescaline as a shortcut to the Beatific Vision. The misrepresentation allowed Zaehner to find an ethical problem in Huxley's position: why go to the trouble of leading a moral life if the end of the Christian path, the Beatific Vision, can be brought about, even before death, by mere drug-taking? In fact, Huxley had not promoted mescaline as a substitute for moral effort: for Huxley, the drug experience is merely a foretaste, not the goal. Finally, Zaehner thought that the blurring of mystical types detracts from theistic experience. To group theistic mystical experience with natural mystical experience is to taint the former with 'lunacy'. Zaehner associated mescaline experiences and natural mystical experiences with psychopathology, repeating the view, popular in the 1950s, that drugs can be psychotomimetic, inducing psychosis-like states.

Zaehner's sharp distinction between natural and religious mystical experiences was not inevitable for a theistic thinker. We have seen, for instance, that Inge and Underhill understood nature mysticism as 'immanental', a mysticism of the creator God in the creation. Extrovertive experience for these writers is a form of theistic mystical experience. Zaehner accepted that there are mystical accounts in which natural and theistic elements are interwoven, but he denied that the testimonies accurately reflect the experiences. Subjects may well describe their extrovertive experiences in theistic terms, but this is really misinterpretation, a pantheistic misidentification of Nature and God. Zaehner identified several kinds of interpretative mistakes:

1. Nature mystics often misunderstand their sense of unity with nature as *union with God*.
2. Mystics sometimes impose a monistic interpretation of *identity with the Absolute* on experiences that are really natural mystical.
3. Nature mystics often misinterpret their feeling of unity with nature as *real identity with the objective natural world*, when it is in fact unity with an inner, subjective image of the world.

In the first case, the mystic commits the 'pantheistic error', equating God with nature, as Zaehner had done in his youth. According to

Zaehner, God–nature misidentification is not inevitable: only dull-witted mystics make the mistake, unlike acute-minded ones, such as Tennyson, Proust, and Jefferies. Zaehner has rightly been criticized for assuming that if there is to be theistic interpretation of natural mystical experience, it will take a pantheistic form (Johnson 1959: 145; Moore 1977: 230–1). The only theistic interpretation that Zaehner considers is pantheistic identification of God and the world. However, a theistic mystic is more likely to discuss the experience in terms of the presence of God, retaining the immanence–transcendence distinction. God is seen in the world, but the two are not completely identified.

FOUR UNFLATTERING EXPLANATIONS

Natural mystical experience is always portrayed by Zaehner as deficient in some way: it is (1) a close relation of the manic phase of manic-depressive illness, (2) regression to the infantile or prenatal state, (3) unity with a mindless power in nature, or (4) unity with an internal image of the material world. Zaehner remains committed to the association with manic states, wavers over the regression hypothesis, rejecting it in one form but welcoming it in another guise, and in the later works he quietly forgets his earlier musings on the impersonal power behind nature. It is the last option—unity with an inner image of the world, couched in Jungian and Aristotelian terminologies—that comes closest to being Zaehner's final explanation. It is also the most interesting of his explanations.

Mania, Madness, and Mescaline

If not identical with the acute manic state, natural mystical experience is at least its 'second cousin' (1957: 106). The difference 'is only one of degree, not of kind', and the two have in common an expansion of the ego and a sense of 'profound metaphysical meaning' (1957: 89, 96). Zaehner misrepresents the phenomenology by understanding the extrovertive self-transformation solely in terms of ego-inflation. It is true that grandiose identification of the ordinary self or ego with deeper realities does sometimes occur, but ego-relaxation or a shift to a higher self is far more common.[3] Nor is

[3] Schlamm (2000: 118–19) discusses Zaehner's misapplication of Jung's concept of inflation to extrovertive experience.

mania typical of spontaneous extrovertive experiences, which are more likely to be associated with peace and detachment from thought. Furthermore, Zaehner omits to mention that his other types of mystical experiences, the monistic and the theistic, also share the sense of deeper reality or meaning, yet he certainly does not regard theistic mystical experience as a close relative of mania.

Extrovertive experience is generated by manic-depressive illness or anything else that leads to a manic state, such as mescaline (Huxley), yoga exercises (Vivekānanda), and the artificial induction of madness through debauchery and deprivation (Rimbaud). However, Zaehner recognizes that extrovertive experiences are often stimulated by the appreciation of natural beauty and that they can be cultivated by emptying the mind of 'conceptual thought' and subjecting it to 'some slight shock', as in Zen practice (1957: 55). In these routes, mania is not induced, which undermines Zaehner's case.

Zaehner's explanation is ontologically reductive: natural mystical experience is *nothing but* a manic state, nothing but the 'hallucination' of 'lunacy'. It is a purely internal affair, bringing no deeper contact with reality. It is notable that Zaehner failed to address Huxley's filtration explanation, according to which mescaline encourages mystical experiences by disrupting the perceptual-organizational structures of the mind, allowing a perception of reality that is normally filtered out (see Chapter 8). Disruption of the filter, whether by drugs, mental illness, or yoga, allows contact with deeper realities, and it is therefore no surprise to Huxley that some drug states and psychopathologies may have mystical accompaniments. To support his reduction of extrovertive experience to manic delusion, Zaehner should have disposed of Huxley's filtration explanation, but he simply ignored it, despite its prominence in Huxley's discussion.

Regression: the Return to Mother

Zaehner discusses a 'back to the womb' theory that he finds in Jung, but which he considers to be more representative of Freud. If Zaehner had been familiar with Freud's remarks on the 'oceanic feeling', he might have drawn directly on Freud, but instead he utilized a Jungian source to sketch a Freudian-style explanation.[4] This is Jung's *Psychology of the Unconscious*, a transitional work written before Jung had fully cast off Freud's influence. In the work, Jung

[4] But note that Zaehner's 'back to the womb' explanation addresses immersive unity, whereas Freud's explanation of the oceanic feeling deals with incorporative unity.

quotes Karl Joël's extrovertive account at the end of a series of mythological and literary illustrations that show 'in unmistakable symbolism, the confluence of subject and object as the reunion of mother and child' (Jung 1919: 198–9). According to Zaehner, Jung in this transitional period reduces the mystical impulse 'to a dim memory of childhood, that state of consciousness not yet born in which the infant is still unable to distinguish itself from the mother who gave it life' (1957: 39). Extrovertive experience in the adult is a symptom of regressive tendencies, a 'desire to be unconscious once again in the security of the womb' (1957: 40). Zaehner is not convinced by this explanation of immersive unity, and he raises objections. The most apposite one is raised in *At Sundry Times*: Zaehner points out that the experiences are not what would be expected from a return to 'embryonic unconsciousness'. There is 'nothing blurred or indistinct' about them: as well as bliss, they involve intelligence and the deep sense of reality (1958: 53).

However, in typical fashion, Zaehner confuses matters by invoking regression in a broader psychological scheme that he finds in the later Jung and his followers—Erich Neumann is named. Here the mystical path as a whole is understood to be progressive, directed towards individuation, a view that William Parsons has recently found inspiring (1999: 144–5), although Parsons looks to revisionist psychoanalytic theorists, rather than to Jungians. In Zaehner's stage theory, extrovertive experience is the initial, *retrogressive* step on the mystical path, a regression of the ego into the undifferentiated unconscious, given a theological gloss by Zaehner as a reversion to 'the original innocence, the oneness that the human race enjoyed in Adam' (1957: 168). Once again, the explanation carries an evaluatory barb: the natural mystical type is a 'regression', whereas the other types are advances in psychological and religious development, through monistic and theistic stages, to the fourth and final stage, the Beatific Vision. If Zaehner had been consistent, he would have realized that his sharpest criticism of Freudian-style regression theory applies just as much to his own 'stage theory'. As Zaehner had pointed out, extrovertive experience cannot be mere regression to indistinct consciousness, for it brings intelligence and clarity.

An Impersonal Power behind Nature

Not all of Zaehner's extrovertive explanations are purely psychological. Stimulated by his reading of Richard Jefferies, Zaehner has one explanation that gives a role to a transpersonal reality. Zaehner

supposes that there is a mindless, irrational, amoral, animating force or spirit in the universe, which he carelessly identifies with the *prāṇa* of Indian religious philosophy and with the Jungian collective unconscious. The impersonal spirit is able to produce a 'powerful sympathetic reaction' in human beings, giving rise to extrovertive experience. To confuse matters, Zaehner talks not only of the sympathetic reaction to the spirit but also of a unity with the spirit. There is a 'dissolution' of the experiencing self in 'the spirit that pervades all nature' (1957: 6). Either way, the explanation is typically unflattering and reflects Zaehner's antipathy towards extrovertive experience: the experience is unity with a terrible, ruthless spirit or is provoked sympathetically by it. Zaehner understands the sympathetic reaction in the following way. The spirit is an intermediary, establishing a 'rapport' between the external, material world and an inner image of the world latent in the mind of the mystic. The spirit 'calls forth' an ecstatic response of communion, but it is the human mind 'alone that creates and experiences this ecstasy' (1958: 87). The idea of an inner image is initially an aspect of the 'impersonal power' explanation, but it becomes an explanation in its own right.

An Inner Image of the Natural World

Richard Bucke, the 'naively preposterous' author of some 'extravagantly silly claims', was foolish enough to believe that the mystic truly experiences the universe and discovers that there is no such thing as dead matter (Zaehner 1974*b*: 210; 1972: 63). Such foolishness is not uncommon amongst nature mystics: 'it is fatally easy to interpret' the experiences as identity with the world, 'for the nature mystic has the overwhelming conviction that this is what the experience is' (1958: 56). Zaehner, with the help of his shrewd witness, Richard Jefferies, sees through the delusion and exposes the patent misinterpretation:

> Jefferies knew very well that by communing with Nature you did not thereby 'become nature'. This would have appeared disgusting and degrading to him. (1958: 86)

Nature is indifferent and inhospitable, and matter is dead. Zaehner believes that the universe is 'mindless, devoid of consciousness, and amoral' (1972: 60). Who would want to be united with it? Even more damning is the *logical* impossibility of attaining unity with the natural world. It is against reason to suppose that a human being can become identical with the universe (1958: 76). It is a retreat to

the illogical thinking of Lévy-Bruhl's primitives, who have yet to free themselves from the 'curious sense of identity with Nature . . . called *participation mystique*' (1958: 76).[5] Reason shows that 'such an identification cannot be literally true on *any* plane of consciousness'. Zaehner can make the claim because he adopts a very narrow conception of extrovertive unity for the purpose of his argument, understanding it as the extreme identification of the limited, psychophysical person with the cosmos. We have seen, however, that subjects describe a variety of unities, none of which need be logically impossible. For instance, there is nothing illogical about the experiential discovery that the world is a whole (integral unity), or that one is a part of the whole (immersive unity), or that there are unifying links between the parts (interconnective unity), or that the world has a unifying ground (source unity). Even the incorporative and identificatory unities are not logically impossible if the subject united with nature is not the limited, human organism but a greater self or mind.

Rejecting unity with the universe as a logical impossibility, Zaehner seeks an alternative explanation. The one he finds most satisfactory places an inner image of the world in the human mind. Initially, in *Mysticism Sacred and Profane*, Jungian psychology had surfaced in the 'regression' and 'impersonal spirit' explanations. However, Jungian psychology is called upon to support the 'inner image' explanation when Zaehner raises macrocosm–microcosm doctrine, which he believes can be understood to mean that 'to all outward objects there correspond psychological realities in the human soul' (1957: 103). Man feels identity with nature through the inner image, mediated by the impersonal force. Zaehner is still groping towards an explanation here, and the Jungian collective unconscious is identified mainly with the impersonal force but also, in some places, with the inner, psychological image. In *At Sundry Times*, the explanation is freed to a greater extent from the 'impersonal force'. Now the collective unconscious becomes essentially psychological,

[5] See also Neumann (1969: 378). The prelogical, magico-religious mentality famously attributed to 'primitives' by Lévy-Bruhl is not quite the same as the extrovertive mystical state, and the term 'mystical participation' can therefore be misleading. Both involve unitive feelings and understandings, but Lévy-Bruhl was concerned with the *magical* worldview ('collective representations') of primitives, including beliefs in occult forces and sympathetic relations, and with the interpretation of events that follows from the magical worldview. Jung, who critiques Lévy-Bruhl in 'Archaic Man' (1933), gives his own 'projective' theory of mystical participation, and, like Lévy-Bruhl, addresses magical extensions into the world, not the unitive expansions of extrovertive mystical experience.

understood as the inner image. However, Jung and the collective unconscious take a back seat, Aristotle becoming the preferred authority. Zaehner supposes that both postulate an 'inner image' in the human mind, and it is this image which lies behind natural mystical experience:

> The feeling of identity that the nature mystic . . . feels with all Nature . . . is something happening within the human psyche, and has nothing to do with objective Nature as such. (1958: 77)

Expressed in Jungian terms, the explanation goes thus: as 'a common inheritance of the whole human race', the collective unconscious has contents as diverse as 'the whole world', and when it appears in consciousness, the mystic mistakenly believes that identification with the world has taken place (1958: 86). In Aristotelian terminology, which Zaehner prefers, the natural mystical unity of knower, knowing, and known is an identity with the forms of things in the mind of the knower:

> This 'form' is in every man and constitutes part of his eternal 'Now', and it is the activation of this form or *imago mundi* which gives rise to all the marvels and transports of the nature mystic. (1958: 81)

The nature mystic is not united with a tree or with the world but with the form of the tree or with the form of the world in the individual mind of the mystic. The unsophisticated mystic misinterprets unity with the universal 'form' as unity with the universe itself. But the unity is, in fact, unity with innate contents of the human mind, not with the world at large.[6] Jefferies was right to regard his own experiences as nothing 'other than purely subjective' (Zaehner 1972: 50), but Bucke made the common mistake of believing that he was in touch with reality. Zaehner's inner-image explanation is more flattering than the others, but it is still not affirmative. Nature mystics are often deluded, believing that unity with the world has been achieved. Furthermore, the image is an image of the world, a material reality that Zaehner does not rate highly.

If Zaehner were theorizing today, he might have turned to cognitive science instead of Jung and Aristotle. The extrovertive mystic makes contact with schemata, with mental models of the world, not

[6] Zaehner's understanding can be contrasted with medieval theories of the *visio mundi archetypi*, touched upon in Chapter 4. For medieval thinkers, such as Eckhart, the totality of the forms in the intellect is an *objective* reality and ontologically prior to the natural world.

with the world itself. Zaehner could then argue that mystics, confronted with the normally hidden contents of the cognitive unconscious, feel that they have acquired expanded knowledge of the world when it is really the cognitive models in their own minds that they have accessed. Cognitive psychology could also attend to a matter that Zaehner does not properly address, the unity between the subject and the inner model. How does the identification take place? Cognitive explanations could describe changes in the mechanisms that discriminate between self and not-self. For instance, Brian Lancaster's 'I'-tag model of memory and perception, derived from the study of Buddhist Abhidhamma psychology of perception and the data of cognitive neuroscience, could be applied (1997; 2000; 2004). An increase in the tagging of contents as 'I' would bring pervasive identifications (self-expansion), whereas a decrease would bring contraction (self-dissolution).

The 'inner image' of Zaehner's theory is innate and universal, but a cognitive adaptation of the theory would probably mix innate and acquired elements, fleshing out inborn structures and processes with contextually sourced material. It is debatable whether such a model could explain the unity and order of the world intuited in extrovertive experiences. Access to all one's mental schemata may not give a unifying experience at all, but a highly chaotic one, as the diverse schemata do not necessarily mesh together well. Furthermore, the cognitive version—like Zaehner's underdeveloped 'Jungian' and 'Aristotelian' forerunners—would have to be elaborated to explain extrovertive features that do not automatically follow from the discovery of an inner model, such as altered luminosity, love, and bliss. The inner-image theory addresses the highly noetic character of the experiences, but needs development if other features are to be explained.

Psychoanalytic Explanations

Predictably, psychoanalytic discussions of mystical experience dwell on two related issues, *psychological development* and *mental health*. William Parsons (1999) gives a useful classification of psychoanalytic approaches: (1) reductive or classic, (2) adaptive, and (3) transformational, with intermediate positions.[7] Reductive approaches,

[7] See Parsons (1999: 10–11, 123–39) for examples of the various approaches.

which view mystical experience as regressive and pathological, make up the oldest layer of explanation but have more recent representatives too, such as Fisher's interpretation of all-embracing, mystical love as an expression of repressed hatred (1982: 267–8).[8] Adaptive approaches, which draw on later psychoanalytic developments, such as object-relations theory, attribute a healing, reparative function to mystical experience. Transformational approaches, a fairly recent development, show 'a marked sympathy with the transcendent, religious claims of mystics' (Parsons 1999: 11). Parsons's own approach, drawing on Winnicott and Kohut, is adaptive-transformational. Rapprochements within psychoanalysis, however, are tame in comparison with theorizing outside the psychoanalytic fold: psychoanalytic and Jungian elements have been integrated into transpersonal psychologies that give spiritual realities a foundational role (e.g. Washburn 1994; 1995; Wade: 1996).

Developmental psychology under the influence of Jungian thought is more likely to find enriching, growth-oriented outcomes in mystical experience. Erich Neumann gave the classic Jungian exposition in his 1948 Eranos paper 'Mystical Man', which reads like a more psychological, less metaphysical elaboration of Carpenter's developmental theory of consciousness, both having roots in Romanticism and neo-Lamarckian theory of inherited memory. According to Neumann, humankind's 'original cosmic sense', in which ego has not separated from nonego, gives way to a stage of isolated and lonely ego, but a trace of the original condition remains, an 'archetype of paradisical wholeness' projected into the past as the lost paradises of prehistory and childhood (1969: 378). But the ego, having heroically separated itself from the unconscious, is compelled by the tension of separation to meet the nonego again in an encounter fraught with danger and transformative potential. Mystical ego-regression to the unity of the unconscious can have two outcomes when the mystic returns to ordinary life, an 'immanent world-transforming mysticism' or a 'nihilistic uroboros mysticism'. In the former, the mystic feels able to engage with the world, and the regression has enriching results, culminating in 'last-stage mysticism', an awareness of the numinous in the world 'everywhere and at all times', a permanent extrovertive experience (1969: 414). In nihilistic mysticism, however, the mystic rejects the world and consciousness, and the regression proves disintegrative (1969: 397–401).

[8] For other examples, see the studies summarized by Beit-Hallahmi (1996: 67–74).

For Jungians, old-school psychoanalytic understanding of mysticism is one-sided because it recognizes only the second outcome, dissolution of the differentiated ego, not the world-affirming return of the ego from an enriching encounter with the unconscious.

The two psychoanalytic explanations discussed below, due to Freud and Andrew Brink, are considered here because they specifically address extrovertive mysticism. Both explanations look back towards the infant stage of child development, although in very different ways. Neither theorist indulges in the heavy pathologizing that marks some psychoanalytic assessments. Freud is silent on pathology, and his explanation is open to adaptive extension: regression to the oceanic feeling may take place in the service of the ego (e.g. Prince and Savage 1966). Brink, drawing on object-relations theory, explicitly attributes a reparative role to the extrovertive orientation. In both approaches, psychological processes are at the heart of the explanations, with no recourse to transpersonal realities or contextual contributions, although Brink's object-relations approach does have a social component, tracing the reparative, mystical impulse to an early breakdown in loving relationships.

FREUD: THE 'OCEANIC FEELING'

Whilst Freud repeatedly applied psychoanalytic theory to religion, tracing its roots to the child's relationship with the father, he gave little attention to mystical experience. Nevertheless, Freud's explanation of the 'oceanic feeling' as a pre-oedipal, infantile state has been influential. Freud specifically addresses the 'feeling of an indissoluble bond, of being one with the external world as a whole' ((1930) 1961: 65), a phrase suggestive of the more expansive extrovertive experiences. In the early 1920s, Freud had entered into correspondence with the eminent French writer Romain Rolland. As a young man, Rolland had enjoyed several extraordinary experiences, including a momentary feeling of identity with the Breithorn during an Alpine hike in 1889. Rolland thought that the glimpses afforded by these brief experiences could be developed, and he believed that he had entered permanently into the state of 'oceanic feeling'.[9] The feeling was a 'constant state' for Rolland, an ever-present background to mental activity, like 'a sheet of water which I feel flushing

[9] On Rolland's early glimpses and his belief that a permanent state can be attained, see Parsons (1999: 90–108).

under the bark' (Rolland, in Parsons 1999: 174). As a combined experience of background limitlessness and ordinary mental activity, it is reminiscent of Forman's permanent 'dualistic mystical state' (DMS).

In a letter dated 5 December 1927, Rolland congratulated Freud on his analysis of religion in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) but expressed regret that Freud had made no attempt to analyse 'spontaneous religious sentiment' (Rolland, in Parsons 1999: 173). Rolland admitted that he was himself familiar with the 'sensation', a feeling without 'perceptible limits, and like oceanic', and believed that he could recognize the feeling in many others, Western and Eastern. He concluded that the experience is the impetus behind religion, a source of 'religious energy' that becomes channelled into the establishment of religions. Rolland's letter set Freud two tasks: to formulate a psychoanalytic explanation of the oceanic feeling, and to counter Rolland's explanation of the origin of religion in the oceanic feeling.

In the opening chapter of *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), Freud rose to the challenge by interpreting the oceanic feeling as a feature of the pre-oedipal ego and as incidental to the origin of religion. Freud begins his analysis by pointing out that the ego is not so distinct as it usually appears and extends 'inwards' without 'sharp delimitation' into the unconscious part of the psychic apparatus that he calls the 'id'. Freud does not develop the thought, presumably because he has to address the 'oceanic' lack of sharp boundaries between the ego and the outer world, not between the ego and another psychic component. Instead, Freud points to both non-pathological and pathological cases in which ego-boundaries lose their distinctness or become faulty. The condition of 'being in love' is a non-pathological example of the dissolution of ego-boundaries, whilst various ego-disturbances, such as alienation from one's own thoughts and feelings, are pathological. Freud proceeds from these examples of fluctuating ego-boundaries in adult life to developments in ego-feeling across the lifespan: adult ego-feeling 'cannot have been the same from the beginning' and is probably the outcome of a developmental process. Freud supposes that the infant at the breast initially makes no distinction between the ego and the external world as the source of sensation, but it comes to do so as it adapts to reality.

Having described a likely process by which the distinction between the ego and the external world comes to be set up, Freud

proceeds to claims about the phase *prior* to the establishment of the distinction. First, Freud assumes that ego-feeling exists before the distinction emerges. Second, he claims that this ego-feeling is all-inclusive. The infant at the mother's breast (the prime source of stimuli for the infant) has an ego-feeling that embraces all sensations. Subsequent ego-development involves a narrowing of the ego-feeling:

> originally the ego includes everything, later it separates off an external world from itself. Our present ego-feeling is, therefore, only a shrunken residue of a much more inclusive—indeed, an all-embracing—feeling which corresponded to a more intimate bond between the ego and the world about it. (Freud (1930) 1961: 68)

Third, Freud claims that the state of ego-feeling prior to its contraction persists to varying degrees in many individuals, alongside the mature, separative form of ego-feeling. It is at this point that Freud's explanation of Rolland's oceanic feeling crystallizes: Freud alleges that the 'ideational contents' expected of the early ego-feeling are exactly those of the feeling reported by his correspondent, namely 'limitlessness' and 'a bond with the universe' ((1930) 1961: 68). The oceanic feeling, then, is an ego-feeling that has survived from the early, pre-separative psychic state of the newborn infant. In adulthood, the all-inclusive, ideational content of the feeling is described as a sense of oneness with the universe.

In Freud's estimation, the oceanic feeling cannot be the source of religion because it is 'not itself the expression of a strong need' ((1930) 1961: 72). In line with the explanation of the origins of religion pursued in *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud understands religion to derive from needs that emerge in later ego-development, from the child's feeling of helplessness and consequent longing for the protective father. By taking the feeling of helplessness to be the psychological source of religion, Freud deprives earliest infancy of a role in the generation of religion: according to Freud, the new-born infant has not separated the world from itself and therefore confronts no separate world that could induce feelings of helplessness.

In conciliatory fashion, Freud accepts that the oceanic feeling may induce some kind of need, specifically a need to restore the 'limitless narcissism' of the early ego, but he does not place this restorative need at the root of religion. Rather, he supposes that the oceanic feeling becomes 'connected' to religion at a later time. The ideational contents of the feeling become attached to religion as

a 'consolation', as a means of denying the threatening nature of the external world ((1930) 1961: 72). Strongly committed to an account of the origins of religion, neuroses, and the personality in childhood rather than in very early infancy, Freud cannot imagine that the need associated with the earliest ego-feeling, a need to return to a state of inclusive ideation, is responsible for the origin of religion.

Freud's analysis of the oceanic feeling specifically addresses feelings of 'oneness with the universe'. His analysis is not an explanation of mystical experience in general. If Freud had applied psychoanalytic theory to other experiences that attract the 'mystical' label, such as union with a personal God, then he might have drawn upon different aspects of psychoanalytic theory, including stages of development later than the pre-oedipal, in which persons distinct from oneself are discriminated. Mysticisms of union with a loving father God might have received an explanation that raises oedipal libido, the sexual desire for union with the parent. For mysticisms that describe a movement 'inwards' to identity with a spiritual core or consciousness, Freud might have looked to intrapsychic processes and components, pursuing his remark about the lack of 'sharp delimitation' between the ego and id. Indeed, Eigen (1998: 27) notes that Freud later referred to mysticism as 'the obscure self-perception of the realm outside the ego, of the id' (Freud (1941) 1964: 300).

Freud appears to have had little familiarity with the phenomenology of extrovertive experience: his explanation deals solely with incorporative unity, not with other features, such as the full range of unities, complex noetic contents, altered temporality, love, and luminosity. Freud might have found a way of addressing some additional features with his pre-oedipal explanation if he had been sufficiently interested in pursuing the matter. For Freud, however, the oceanic feeling was an irrelevance. The real source of religion for him was childhood helplessness. Had Freud made a greater effort to study extrovertive experience he might have accommodated some of the other features. Timelessness, for instance, could be considered indicative of the Freudian 'primary processes' in the infantile mind, mental processes that are oblivious of space and time distinctions. However, it is difficult to see how Freud would have explained luminosity, expansive cosmic vision, all-encompassing love, and temporal inclusivity in pre-oedipal terms. Like the simple deconstructivism described in the previous chapter, simple regression is unable to account for complex extrovertive phenomena.

Freud's account has a *cognitive* slant, in both its characterization and explanation of the oceanic feeling. It is not framed in the classical Freudian biological terms of instinct, psychic energy, and investment of psychic energy, but in the cognitive language of 'ideation'. The tenor of the discussion is set by Freud's initial remarks about the difficulty of coming to grips with feelings scientifically. Unable to empathize with the oceanic feeling himself or investigate its physiological correlates, Freud decides to focus on the 'ideational content', which he takes to be the sense of 'being one with the external world as a whole'. Freud's strategy, which is to focus on the 'ideational content', shapes his characterization of the experience. Without attempting to justify the move, he slips from a methodological decision to a claim about the nature of the experience: the oceanic feeling is 'in the nature of an intellectual perception', a thought, although not without some feeling-tone appropriate to the 'range' of the thought ((1930) 1961: 65). However, Freud's appreciation of the cognitive content of the experience is limited, consisting entirely of the ideation of oneness with the world. No attention is given to other noetic characteristics of mystical experiences, such as the oft-reported meaningfulness, inclusive comprehension, or special insights. Freud greatly underestimates the depth and variety of extrovertive knowing, a depth that is not consistent with Freud's pre-oedipal understanding.

Freud's explanation depicts the 'oceanic feeling' as a *regressive* phenomenon, a return to a state of feeling that he believes to be characteristic of earliest infancy. It is notable that Freud made no comment about the psychological health or pathology of the regression. However, Freud, like many of his followers, probably viewed the regression as pathological, for he understood the unitive feeling as prior to the adaptation of the infant to reality, an accommodation that comes with development. As a retreat from reality, the oceanic feeling must constitute an unmitigated developmental failure. In *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud is silent on the matter, perhaps out of deference to his esteemed correspondent, who had the experience himself and valued its effects. When raising the oceanic feeling with Freud, Rolland expected that it would be classified as a psychological malady but explained that he had 'observed its rich and beneficent power' in many others and that he had himself found it to be 'a source of vital renewal' (Rolland, in Parsons 1999: 174).

Freud's explanation is *genetic*: the oceanic feeling originates in infancy. It is also *ontological*: the oceanic feeling is really vestigial

infantile ideation. The pre-oedipal unitive condition depends on an ideation that has yet to be corrected by exposure to reality, and reality for Freud is the objective external world successfully studied and explained by naturalistic science, not a unified reality open to experiential contact in mystical states. Freud therefore differs from those theorists, such as Edward Carpenter, who adopt a 'Romantic spiral' model of human development. For these thinkers, the non-differentiation of the primitive or infant state is genuinely informed by transpersonal reality. The unity and knowledge of the infantile experience reflects a unified, noetic reality. Furthermore, the adult experience is deemed a progression, rather than a mere regression, because the reality is apprehended by a mind that has passed through the stage of differentiation. Integration with the reflective, adult mind takes place, yielding a stage of development that is more advanced than both the initial stage of non-differentiation and the intermediate stage of differentiation. In the Jungian version of the developmental spiral, expressed in the mystical context by Neumann, it is unclear whether the encounter with the unconscious brings close contact with transpersonal reality. Jungian theorizing is usually framed as epistemically bounded psychology, rather than as metaphysics.[10] However, Neumann does seem to go 'extrapsychological' when he speculates about the end of the mystical path in the permanent apprehension of the world as the 'radiation' of the Self (1969: 413–15).

Freud's view that the ego-feeling of early infancy is an ideation of limitlessness with attendant feelings is purely conjectural. Freud provides no evidence for his characterization of early ego-feeling and omits to consider alternatives, such as a complete absence of any sense of self or the presence of some separative self-conceptualization from the very beginning. Without unambiguous, observational evidence, Freud's claim that 'originally the ego includes everything' must be treated with caution, and several researchers and theorists have taken up the matter, arguing for very early signs of self–other differentiation. The evidence seems to suggest that the infant comes into the world with relatively well-developed discriminative and

[10] Roderick Main (1997: 34–6) points out that Jung, in his work on synchronicity, occasionally lowered his Kantian guard and acknowledged a place for metaphysical speculation, so long as it was conducted in cooperation with the unconscious. The physicist Wolfgang Pauli, Jung's colleague in synchronistic studies, undertook such cooperative work, using his own dreams as a source of inspiration.

relational abilities, and so the idea of a specifically infantile oceanic state may be baseless.[11]

THE QUEST FOR THE 'GOOD OBJECT'

Whereas classical psychoanalysis focuses on neurotic outcomes of oedipal, sexual striving for the parent of the opposite sex, object-relations theory and similar 'relational' developments within psychoanalysis look to the deeper pathologies associated with disturbed *interpersonal relations* in the pre-oedipal period. The 'objects' of object relations are usually persons (or parts of persons, notably the breast) with whom the infant engages. The infant is endowed with a fundamental social orientation that pulls it into the world of interpersonal relations and feelings. Psychopathology is understood to originate not in frustrated instinctual drives and the intrapsychic conflicts that ensue but in early breakdown of emotional intimacy. The complications of infant love are therefore at the heart of a pure object-relations approach. Disturbed relations are internalized in the infant's mental representations of self and others, an internalization that works to frustrate the later attainment of fulfilling relations, sexual or otherwise. By stressing the importance of relations and their disruption through loss, deprivation, or unsatisfactory bonding, relational forms of psychoanalytic theory embody a social critique of Freud's drive-centred, individualistic picture of human nature.

A distinctively 'object-relations' explanation of extrovertive experience would make pre-oedipal *relations* central, without merely repeating or modifying Freud's 'pre-oedipal ideation' explanation. Object-relations theory has been applied to nature mysticism in the psychoanalytic study of literature and creativity. From its early days, psychoanalysis associated creativity in the arts with neurosis: Freud saw oedipal phantasies expressed in literary works, and he understood creativity as neurotic daydreaming. Object-relations theory also traces creative activity to psychopathology but is much more willing to attribute a positive function to the activity. Creativity is not a mere expression of neurosis but an attempt to restore psychological well-being, an attempt at 'repair'. Nature mystical poetry, and therefore extrovertive experience, can be interpreted

[11] See, for instance, Washburn (1994: 32–5), Wulff (1997: 366–7), and Merkur (1999: 51–9).

as serving a reparative function. Andrew Brink (1977; 1982) was drawn to the study of object-relations theory through an interest in creativity, more particularly in the creativity of those who suffered parent loss in infancy.[12] He examines the lives and works of five poets, including the 'nature mystic' Thomas Traherne (Brink 1977: 112–43), and tries to understand their creativity as 'symbolic repair', an unconscious attempt through the symbolic recreation of early relationships to build up ego strength compromised by the loss of a parent. Creative persons work towards symbolic repair through their literary and artistic endeavours, which aim towards the restoration of the psychological well-being that obtained before the disruption in relations occasioned by early loss.

Brink's analysis is fairly technical, drawing upon Ronald Fairbairn's object-relations theory, and I shall pass over the details. In simple terms, Brink suggests that the nature mystical tendency, at least as expressed by Traherne and writers who revel in the natural world, stems from early attempts to protect the self from two dangerous sequels of love deprivation, namely hate ('depressive') and withdrawal from love ('schizoid'). The reparative response to these tendencies in Traherne's mystical case is, supposedly, the 'hysterical technique': internalize and repress the source of perceived rejection (the dead parent) and compulsively look for good objects in the outer world. Nature mystical extroversion is an excessive, compensatory valuation of the environment. The explanation is not only genetic and ontological, like Freud's, but also functional: extrovertive experience originates in the disturbed relations of infancy; it consists of a compulsive scanning of the environment for good objects; its function is reparative, overcoming schizoid or depressive tendencies created by loss.

One problem with Brink's thesis is that the adult Traherne primarily looked *within* to find good objects: he turned inward from outer (sensory) things to find them once again but in a 'richer manner'. Traherne's 'nature mysticism' is extrovertive in contents but introvertive in technique: as a Christian Platonist, he looks for and finds the greater world within. In Brink's analysis, repressed,

[12] David Aberbach's approach (1989; 1993), also situated in an object-relations atmosphere of loss and attempted repair, is less technical than Brink's and not so committed to a specific mechanism. Aberbach does not look back to the pre-oedipal period: many of his examples involve parent loss later in childhood (St Teresa, Wordsworth, Bucke, Forrest Reid, the Baal Shem Tov, Krishnamurti). He conjectures that the grief of bereavement may create a need for mystical union.

hateful objects should be found within, not compensatory treasures. But even if we confine the explanation to purely outward-directed cases of extrovertive experience, the explanation is still unsatisfactory because it fails to address phenomenological details. Inclusive love would probably be explained as the exaggerated attempt to embrace the world of good objects, although the love described in many extrovertive accounts does not tally with this picture of strained, emotional longing. Noetic qualities, luminosity, and altered temporality are not addressed. At best, Brink's theory is applicable to an intense nature aesthetic or yearning for consummation in nature but falters if it is extended to extrovertive mystical experience itself, explaining neither the phenomenology nor the variety of circumstances in which it occurs, many of which involve no compulsive scanning of the environment for good objects but a relaxed state of mind.

The Mystical Brain

There can be little doubt that the body, in particular the brain and the rest of the nervous system, has an important role to play in religious and mystical experiences.[13] Crude indications include the association of mystical experience with psychoactive *drugs* that interfere with brain chemistry, although some observers have pointed to differences between drug-induced and spontaneous cases, as noted in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, there is sufficient phenomenological overlap to suggest that drugs sometimes do trigger mystical experiences. The challenge, then, is to explain how the drugs affect the nervous system and how the resultant neurophysiological changes are connected with mystical experiences. Structural similarities between the molecules of psychedelic drugs and neurotransmitters are thought to be significant, for the similarities enable the drugs to interfere with nerve cell receptor sites and therefore with the communication of signals between cells, leading to complex changes in brain activity (e.g. Austin 1998: 440–3).

Other indications come from *organic disorders* of the nervous system, notably epilepsy, which has been associated with intense religious experiences from ancient times. As V. S. Ramachandran

[13] Wulff (1997) gives an introductory overview, including discussion of drugs, organic disorders, and experimental research on the effects of meditation.

explains, focal seizures in the temporal lobes can be attended by powerful emotions, from ecstasy to rage and terror, and in a few cases by 'deeply moving spiritual experiences' that sometimes include feelings of 'cosmic significance' and 'divine presence' (Ramachandran and Blakeslee 1998: 179). The occasional association of mystical experience with temporal-lobe seizure has led some theorists to speculate that the temporal lobes play an important role in mystical experience in general, even when there is no conspicuous neuropathology.

Another crude indication comes from studies that show correlations between *meditative states* and physiological measurements. The early studies, dating from the 1930s, were inevitably limited in technical sophistication, using oxygen consumption, skin conductance, blood pressure, pulse rate, and electrocardiographic (ECG) measurements, but the application of electroencephalography (EEG) from the mid-1950s allowed the study of brainwave patterns during meditation. With the popularization of Asian meditative techniques in the West from the 1960s, experimental investigation became increasingly common, often centred on the alleged benefits of meditation to mind and body, and pursued by both independent investigators and those affiliated with specific approaches, notably Transcendental Meditation, which has generated a large amount of research.[14] Technological advances, including positron emission tomography (PET), single photon emission computed tomography (SPECT), and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), are encouraging ever more sophisticated and localized study of brain activity during meditation. However, it should be stressed that meditative states are not necessarily mystical states. Meditation leads to a variety of states, many of which bear little or no resemblance to extrovertive mystical experience. It is true that some practices appear to be more conducive to extrovertive experience than others, namely those that encourage nondual content-rich awareness, rather than contentless pure consciousness. But even these practices cannot be relied upon to yield well-developed extrovertive mystical experiences on demand for study under laboratory

[14] The extensive literature on experimental studies of meditation is surveyed by Murphy and Donovan (1997) and by Andresen (2000*a*). The former includes an introductory essay by Eugene Taylor, which places the scientific study of meditation within social and historical context and brings out some major foci of research, including the Maharishi's Transcendental Meditation, Herbert Benson's 'Relaxation Response', and more recent developments.

conditions. Anaesthetics and psychedelics could be used to induce mystical experiences on a more regular basis than meditative practices can achieve, but drugs are not subtle instruments and could introduce misleading neurophysiological artefacts.

Clearly, any explanation of extrovertive mystical experience will be incomplete unless the contribution of the brain, or, more likely, the brain in combination with psychological processes, is taken into account. There have been several attempts to link biology, psychology, and religious experience. The earlier ones often took a reductive, pathologizing attitude, attributing the experiences to brain disorders, such as epileptic seizures. But these were counterbalanced by theories that combined the biological and the transpersonal. William James, Henri Bergson, Aldous Huxley, and others speculated that the brain acts as a filter and sometimes allows transpersonal contents into consciousness. R. M. Bucke and Edward Carpenter, in their different ways, linked evolutionary development towards higher consciousness with neurology, distinguishing between cerebral and sympathetic systems. Another biological duality caught the attention of theorists in the 1960s and 1970s: 'split-brain' surgery undertaken to control severe epileptic seizures inspired both academic and popular interest in right-brain–left-brain laterality. The right cerebral hemisphere, attributed holistic, synthetic, intuitive, and visuospatial processing capabilities, presented itself as the obvious biological seat of meditative and mystical experiences. Another concept of biological duality also had an impact in the period, the idea of two activation systems in the body (e.g. Fischer 1971; see Wulff 1997: 109–11). The 'ergotropic' system, associated with arousal of the sympathetic nervous system, tends towards high subcortical excitation, interpreted at the cortical level by subjects as creative, psychotic, and ecstatic experience. The 'trophotropic' system, associated with the parasympathetic system, tends in the opposite direction, towards low excitation and relaxation, interpreted as a meditative state.

Of the more recent explanations that include extrovertive mystical experience within their remit, the most prominent ones have been those of Ramachandran, Michael Persinger, James Austin, and coworkers Andrew Newberg and the late Eugene d'Aquili (see Andresen 2000*b*). Ramachandran raises four possible explanations for the religious character of some temporal-lobe seizures. The first is transpersonal, the second psychological, the third neuropsychological, and the fourth adds a speculative evolutionary and functional

dimension (Ramachandran and Blakeslee 1998: 182–3). First, it is possible that God really visits the subject. Ramachandran considers the explanation untestable, and, as a scientist, he does not pursue the matter. Second, subjects turn to religion in order to handle the powerful emotions set off by their seizures, or they misinterpret the emotions as mystical. Ramachandran is not convinced because other disorders produce disturbed emotions without the same degree of religious intensity. Third, signals from the temporal-lobe seizure interfere with circuitry that connects visual and auditory input to the limbic system (specifically, the amygdala), a system allegedly responsible for the investment of emotional importance in objects and events. The interference results in pervasive investment of importance, so that everything is 'imbued with deep significance'—hence the mystical noetic quality. Fourth, there may be specialized neural circuitry dedicated to religious experience. It has evolved because of its functional value, which is to confer social stability. To test the third explanation, Ramachandran conducted a galvanic skin response experiment with two epileptic subjects who were fascinated with religious matters. The results indicated no general expansion of emotional investment, contrary to the predictions of the theory. Rather, there was enhanced response to religious words and icons, but decreased response to other visual stimuli. The result does not support the idea that extrovertive experience results from brain-induced expansions of emotional significance.

Whereas Ramachandran tries to link the mystical sense of *meaning* with neurological changes, Austin (1998; 2000) addresses *self*, *unity*, *time*, and *knowing* by looking at the brain physiology that supports the sense of self. In effect, Austin takes a deconstructivist approach that looks for the physiological basis of the ordinary self–other distinction and its transformation in mystical experience. Rather than highlighting one or two brain structures and systems, Austin raises quite a few, including the temporal, parietal, and frontal lobes, and a thalamic 'gate' that can shut down the contributions from the lobes. Drawing on his personal experience of Zen practice, Austin distinguishes two experiences and their physiological bases, a state of absorption and the more complex, extrovertive-like episodes of 'insight-wisdom' or *kensho*, which is subdivided into four phases (1998: 589–96). Austin's work benefits from his sensitivity to different types of meditative and mystical states: 'insight-wisdom' is not crudely mixed together with all manner of unitive states and receives individual attention.

D'Aquili and Newberg also point to the contributions of several brain structures, but they specifically trace the loss of self–other distinctions to the blocking ('deafferentiation') of input into the 'orientation association area' (OAA) of the posterior superior parietal lobes (PSPL), an area that is said to monitor spatial orientation. They reason that the OAA continues working even when it is starved of sensory stimuli. As no self-boundaries are detected, the self is interpreted as 'endless and intimately interwoven with everyone and everything the mind senses' (Newberg, d'Aquili, and Rause 2001: 6). In one experiment, experienced meditators focused attention on an object and felt a loss of boundaries: as expected, the brain scan showed decreased activity in the PSPL and increased activity in areas of the brain associated with attention. D'Aquili and Newberg have made ambitious claims, believing that their explanation is applicable to the full range of unitive states, from aesthetic experiences, through romantic love, numinous experiences, Bucke's cosmic consciousness, 'intense trance states', to a contentless state they call 'absolute unitary being' (AUB), comparable in its empty phenomenology to Forman's 'pure consciousness event' (PCE) and Stace's pure consciousness. They also believe that their 'neurotheological' speculations may support a 'megatheology' acceptable to all the world's religions, which would involve explaining theistic union as pure consciousness plus positive affect, a Stace-like suggestion that would scandalize many theologians.

As it stands, the theory of d'Aquili and Newberg is not very helpful when applied to extrovertive experience. Extrovertive experiences often occur when there is plenty of sensory stimulation. Hence, the OAA would not be deprived of stimulation, and there would be no reason for unitive self–other interpretations. Also, the explanation focuses on unity, loss of self-boundaries, and temporal cessation, without addressing other extrovertive features, such as profound noetic qualities, temporal inclusivity, and luminosity. The explanation is best suited to contentless introvertive experiences.

But let us suppose that the d'Aquili–Newberg explanation or some alternative, such as Austin's more tentative but complex model, can be developed in a way that addresses both the phenomenological details and the variety of circumstances in which extrovertive experiences occur. The explanation would raise correlations between brain areas and ordinary experiential contents, and then show how changes to the areas are reflected in extrovertive phenomenology. Would this more sophisticated theory provide a complete

explanation of extrovertive experience? It is easy to gain the impression that neuropsychological explanations have been offered as complete explanations. Changes to brain physiology and the accompanying psychological changes are presented as explanatorily sufficient. However, there are differences between the theorists. Persinger, who traces religious and mystical experience to inducible 'microseizures' in the temporal lobes (e.g. 1983; 1987), believes that naturalistic brain science will account for everything, except for some peripheral details influenced by the context and history of subjects. Ramachandran raises the theoretical possibility of a transpersonal contribution but places it outside the investigative scope of science. It may be thought that Austin, a Zen practitioner as well as a neuroscientist, would allow some room for contact with a unified, transpersonal reality, and he has great respect for the extrovertive encounter with 'reality as it is' in *kensho*. Nevertheless, it appears that Austin holds metaphysics, mind–body philosophy, and theology in some disdain, with a 'Zen-like' preference for experience over philosophizing.

D'Aquili and Newberg are at pains to distance themselves from the view that mystical experience is hallucination or unreal, but their criterion for reality, derived from philosophical musings with a phenomenalist ring (1999: 187–90), is far from convincing. Something is real if it is *felt* to be real, judged from the perspective of ordinary experience. Mystical experiences leave subjects with a feeling of the reality of the experiences, and so the experiences *are* very real, indeed more real than the 'baseline' reality of everyday life (1999: 191–2). This unconventional understanding of 'reality' is matched by d'Aquili and Newberg's venture into mind–body philosophy. They embrace two contradictory positions as true, the primacy of external, material reality (epiphenomenal production of consciousness from the material brain) and the primacy of subjective consciousness (phenomenalist derivation of matter from experience). Accordingly, one can equally say that (1) religious experiences and religious concepts (such as 'God') are generated by the brain, and (2) God (i.e. AUB or pure consciousness) generates the world. Both propositions are 'in a profound and fundamental sense true' because the priority of material reality or consciousness cannot be established (1999: 193). The conclusion depends on an odd truth-principle: two competing claims are true if one cannot be shown to be superior to the other. It also assumes that no progress can be made on the mind–body problem.

D'Aquili and Newberg do at least realize that mind–body philosophy has a bearing on the neuropsychology of mystical experience. When scientific theorists claim that the brain 'creates', 'generates', or 'produces' experience, they all too often assume an epiphenomenalist dualism in which consciousness, ordinary and extraordinary, arises from a purely material brain. There are, however, other ways of conceiving the mind–body relation, some of which can support transpersonal explanations of extrovertive experience, as we shall now see. Brain processes can still be given an important role, as the regulator, selector, or filter of experience. The task of the neuropsychologist, then, is not to map out correlates of mystical phenomenology in brain physiology but to explain how the brain regulates experience and sometimes allows access to transpersonal realities.

8
Mind Beyond the Brain
Reducing Valves and Metaphysics

In the previous two chapters, a number of explanations have been raised that give no role at all to transpersonal factors. Extrovertive experience is a product of religious indoctrination and training, a simple deconstruction of the perceptual stream, a state akin to mania, an encounter with an inner, subjective model of the world, a remnant of infantile ideation, a brain-generated psychological state, and so forth. But not all explanations of extrovertive mystical experience exclude or disregard the possibility of spiritual contributions. Carpenter called upon the universal Self, Inge and Underhill the creator God immanent in the creation, and Stace an empty consciousness outside nature but present to all as the essential self.

But spiritual approaches are likely to be unsatisfactorily vague unless they can be fleshed out with insights drawn from the natural sciences, social sciences, and philosophy. Thus, in the present chapter, I shall be concerned with some ideas that allow consciousness to reach beyond its normal limits. At their most cautious, these ideas stay largely biological and psychological, entertaining the possibility of unconscious contacts with transpersonal regions of consciousness. At their boldest, they draw upon mind–matter metaphysics to explain the intimate relation between world and consciousness that makes extrovertive experiences possible. In some way or other, consciousness is capable of reaching into the world or is already intrinsic to the world, awaiting discovery by the mystic.

The first kind of approach to be considered here can be called *filtration theory*. According to filtration theorists, consciousness is ordinarily kept narrow by biological and psychological selection processes that exclude a great deal of subconscious material. In mystical experience and other non-ordinary states, the filtering process allows greater access to the subconscious, resulting in an expansion of consciousness. Aldous Huxley's filtration theory

deserves special mention because it addresses mystically transformed experiences of the environment and raises a physiological mechanism. Filtration theories can be largely biological and psychological, with little or no philosophical consideration of the nature of the subconscious in its farther reaches. The filtration theories of Huxley and William James are underdeveloped in this respect. Huxley invoked 'Mind at Large' without really clarifying what it is. James, although well placed to inject mind–body metaphysics into his filtration theory of exceptional states of consciousness, never attempted a synthesis of the mystical and metaphysical interests of his later years. Still, James had been willing, if only in passing, to entertain idealism as a metaphysical basis for religious, paranormal, and other exceptional experiences ((1898) 1982: 89 n. 5).

If filtration theories do incorporate a metaphysics of consciousness, they merge with the second type of approach to be considered here. This approach can be called *psychophysical* because it looks to the philosophy of mind for inspiration, specifically to the 'psychophysical' (mind–body) problem, to explain how mind or consciousness can be 'extracerebral', existing beyond the brain in the world at large. Unlike Inge's explanation, which invokes the divine mind of Christian Platonism, psychophysical explanations draw upon modern, post-Cartesian metaphysics. Unlike Stace's explanation, which isolates the transpersonal consciousness from the natural order, psychophysical explanations envisage a close relation between the two, a relation that makes deep experiences of the world possible.

For an explanation to be properly psychophysical, mind–matter metaphysics must be used to shed light on the relation between the world at large and the extracerebral consciousness. There are a number of options available to theorists, including various dualisms and monisms, and several theorists have put forward psychophysical explanations of mystical experience. Evelyn Underhill's temporary patronage of Bergson's 'vitalism' has already been noted in Chapter 4. In the same period, J. E. Mercer and Edward Carpenter linked idealist metaphysics and extrovertive experience. Given the present resurgence of interest in the mind–body problem, psychophysical explanations could once again make an impression. Amongst the more recent contributions, Timothy Sprigge has linked idealism and extrovertive experience, and William Barnard has suggested a neo-Jamesian 'field' theory of mystical experience, descended from Fechner's dual-aspect monism but made nondual in

an effort to bring it into line with James's neutral monism.[1] For reasons that will become clear, I consider idealism to offer the best prospects for successful psychophysical explanation, and more specifically, I favour a panpsychic form of idealism.

Subliminal Mind and Huxley's Reducing Valve

The idea that consciousness has hidden, subconscious depths became a matter of intense speculation in the nineteenth century, in connection with hypnotic states and a wide variety of other mental phenomena (Whyte 1962; Ellenberger 1970):

- abnormal: somnambulism, hallucination, multiple personality, hysteria
- normal: memory, thought, perception, volition, instinct, imagination, dreaming
- supernormal: creativity, premonitions, visions, ecstasies, mediumship

The subconscious could be understood in a purely physical way: for instance, W. B. Carpenter (1813–85), the noted physiologist and interactionist dualist, championed the idea of 'unconscious cerebration' in *Principles of Mental Physiology* (1874). For Carpenter, the unconscious consists of purely material, cerebral processes and is therefore physiological rather than psychological. At the other extreme, in Romantic and idealist thought, the subconscious could be given a far-reaching role, as an intelligence or will with a cosmic level of operation. Without venturing so deeply into realms of metaphysical speculation, it was possible to attribute consciousness to the subconscious. Several psychologists and philosophers, including Pierre Janet, Alfred Binet, William James, Edmund Gurney, and Frederic Myers, supposed that hidden states of consciousness or 'secondary selves' coexist with ordinary states. This concept of a 'subliminal' or 'transmarginal' consciousness, inspired by the study of dual personality, could be applied to a broad range of experiences, abnormal, normal, and supernormal. Myers surveyed

[1] Note also Randrup (1997), who finds evidence in both extrovertive experiences and modern scientific disciplines for the superiority of idealist (Berkeley) or sceptical (Hume) philosophy over 'materialist realism'. And Forman (1998*a*: 199–200) has speculated that consciousness is like a field that 'may not only transcend our own bodily limits, but somehow may interpenetrate or connect both self and external objects', perhaps in panpsychic fashion, in a manner described by Leibniz's monadology or Whitehead's process philosophy.

the range in his posthumously published *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death* (1903), although he had only a little to say about the mystical end of the spectrum ('transcendental ecstasy'). In the twentieth century, severely circumscribed notions of the 'unconscious' achieved dominance, first the pathology-ridden Freudian unconscious and more recently the information-processing unconscious of cognitive psychology, although Jung's theory of the unconscious harked back to the broader concerns of the nineteenth century, as did Assagioli's model of psychic structure, which has higher as well as lower regions of the unconscious.[2]

The concept of the subliminal takes consciousness beyond the limits ordinarily attributed to it but does not necessarily extend consciousness beyond the person into the universe at large. Myers and James were more than inclined to believe that the subliminal consciousness opens out to transpersonal depths, but the consciousness could also be understood as purely personal, with no reach beyond the individual mind to other minds or to the natural world. Indeed, James's final discussion of mystical experience, in 'A Suggestion About Mysticism' (1910), concerns itself with only personal extensions of consciousness. James noted that whilst some deny the existence of transmarginal consciousness, others allow it to extend between minds in telepathy. For his part, James says that he postulates the existence of the transmarginal consciousness but 'prefers not to set any definite bounds to its extent' ((1910) 1978: 159), an ambiguous statement that could suggest either belief in the great extensiveness of consciousness or cautious reluctance to pronounce on the matter. Whatever the case, James does not attempt to integrate his concept of transmarginal consciousness with his philosophical work on pure experience,[3] and he makes no appeal to

[2] For instance, Jung's willingness to ascribe growth-orientation and higher intelligence to aspects of the unconscious reflects the optimistic appraisals of some earlier theorists, including Myers. On the Romantic background to Jung's thought, see Ellenberger (1970: 727–31), Clarke (1992: 57–73), Douglas (1997: 19–28), and Shamdasani (2003). For recent attempts to transplant Jung's work from a Freudian context to a 'French-Swiss-English-and-American psychotherapeutic axis', see Taylor (1996*a*; 1998; 1999: 210–13) and Shamdasani (1998; 2003). On the historical background to Assagioli's psychosynthesis, see Hardy (1987).

[3] McDermott (1986: xxx–xxxi) discusses a similar gap between James's psychical research and philosophical work but finds common 'attitudes and positions' between the two, identifying five areas of overlap, including commitment to science–religion reconciliation, emphasis on subjective experience, and dissatisfaction with mind–body dualism. The same could be said of James's mystical interests and philosophical work: they are not synthesized but tend in the same direction.

extracerebral consciousness in the natural world to explain extrovertive mystical experiences.

Having posited subliminal streams of consciousness, James, Myers, and other theorists explained abnormal and supernormal states in the following way. The contents of ordinary consciousness are 'selected' or 'filtered' from the subliminal consciousness, but if the filtering becomes less efficient or changes its operation, previously excluded contents emerge, giving rise to non-ordinary experiences, including mystical experiences. According to filtration theorists, mystical experiences arise through the emergence of previously hidden material, from the personal subconscious of the mystic or from a transpersonal domain. Many of the psychologists and philosophers who discussed selection and filtration ideas took an active interest in psychical research, and several had terms as President of the Society for Psychical Research: James, Myers, Henri Bergson, F. C. S. Schiller, C. D. Broad, and H. H. Price. Bergson's philosophy of perception and memory has been the most influential filtration theory, and it inspired the mystical filtration theories of Underhill and Huxley. Bergson's theory, presented in *Matière et mémoire* (1896), was initially directed at normal perception and memory, drawing evidence from pathologies of speech and memory associated with brain damage, but in 1913 he suggested that the theory could be applied to telepathy and near-death life-reviews (Bergson 1920). Students of the paranormal typically refer to Bergson when they raise filtration theory. William James's filtration theory, unveiled in his 1897 Ingersoll Lecture 'Human Immortality' and applied to the whole range of exceptional experiences, is not so well known but has lately attracted increasing attention (e.g. Sprigge 1993; Taylor 1996*b*; Barnard 1997).

Filtration theorists have had much to say about the utilitarian and protective functions of the filter. It is oriented towards everyday survival, making available perceptions and memories of immediate, practical relevance, and preventing a flood of irrelevant or disturbing information from overwhelming the organism. However, theorists have not had much to say about the operation of the filter. How does it work? According to Bergson, the brain, nervous system, and body are composed of neutral 'images', like the rest of the universe, and so perception consists of images selected by images (see Moore 1996: 18–39). Perception of the world is direct but selective. However, the mechanism through which the external images are selected by the nervous system and brain is not really explained. We are told

why certain images are selected, for their utilitarian value, not how they are selected. If the brain is a key factor in the selection process, clearly a filtration theory will have to draw on neuroscience to furnish an adequate account. The neuropsychological resources available to early theorists were very limited, and it is understandable that they had little to say about the workings of the selector mechanism.

Aldous Huxley's filtration theory is notable for the inclusion of a rudimentary physiological element. Drawing on Broad (1949), Huxley reproduces Bergson's idea that anything that disrupts an organism's orientation to life and action will lead to a relaxation of cerebral selection and therefore an expansion of consciousness, but he supplements the idea with an explanation of the mescaline effect ((1954) 1994: 13–14):

1. Mescaline inhibits enzymes that regulate the glucose supply to brain cells.
2. There is a decrease in the amount of sugar available to the brain.
3. With the lack of sugar, 'the undernourished ego grows weak'.
4. A weak ego 'can't be bothered to undertake the necessary chores'.

At this point the functional explanation takes over. The reducing valve has a utilitarian function, taking selections from Mind at Large that will be of use to the organism for its biological survival. Huxley laments the two-sided character of *language*, which is used to 'formulate and express the contents of this reduced awareness'. Language helps us cope with the world but makes us think that there is only the reduced awareness. Thus, according to Huxley, language preserves the reduced awareness.[4] However, if the survival imperative is diminished in some way, the filter will not be so selective and more of Mind at Large passes through.

Huxley's contribution is an explanation of how a drug can lead to the Bergsonian 'disinterestedness in life'. It is not an explanation of the workings of the selector mechanism or the nature of Mind at Large. Two important steps remain unexplained. First, how does the reduction of the survival imperative lead to a change in the workings

[4] Deikman gives even greater importance to language: it not only preserves the reduced awareness but also brings it about. Whereas mystical practices (meditation, renunciation, service) work by subduing the survival self and encouraging a receptive mode, language works in the other direction, promoting an action mode. Indeed, language is the 'very essence' of the survival-oriented action mode (1976: 78). Action depends on the discriminative analysis of the world into objects, and Deikman regards language as central to the discriminative analysis.

of the reducing valve? There would have to be something that monitors the survival orientation of the current ego-state and adjusts the reducing valve accordingly. No such mechanism is described. Second, there is no explanation of the selector mechanism itself and how it works on Mind at Large. We are told what the process does, not how it operates.

Huxley's physiological explanation has the unfortunate consequence that any substantial reduction in brain sugar level will lead to mystical and paranormal experiences. Hypoglycaemics everywhere should be falling into clairvoyant and mystical states. Nevertheless Huxley stuck to the idea and expanded on it in *Heaven and Hell*, pointing out that fasting can lead to visionary experiences ((1956) 1994: 64). Huxley mentions other possible physiological contributions to visionary experience, such as the effect of carbon dioxide, which 'lowers the efficiency of the brain as a reducing valve'—hence the yogic breathing exercises and the use of singing and chanting to induce altered states of consciousness ((1956) 1994: 104–5). More recent attempts to link physiology with psychedelic states point to the similarity between the chemical structures of psychedelics and neurotransmitters, notably dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine, which act as chemical messengers between nerve cells. The implication is that mescaline and other psychedelics with neurotransmitter-like molecular structures, such as LSD, affect the transmission of signals between brain cells. Filtration theorists may hope that study of the impact of psychedelics on brain physiology will take them a step closer to understanding the workings of the filter mechanism, by indicating the physiological basis of the filter or by showing how the altered brain chemistry diminishes 'attention to life'.

Huxley was reluctant to grant total perception of the universe to the mystic. During mystical experience, the reducing valve opens more than usual but remains operative, excluding a great deal ((1954) 1994: 12–13). Huxley seems to have taken his own mescaline experience as representative when he decided that mystical expansion is limited to fairly superficial perceptual transformations. However, the idea of a partially opened barrier is suggestive. Phenomenological variations and evidence of stages could be put down to different degrees of filtering and even to several stages of selection. The idea has arisen in the study of paranormal phenomena (e.g. Price 1960: 79). Telepathic and clairvoyant cognitions sometimes appear to contain a grain of truth but are very often *erroneous* in

other respects or dressed in *symbolic* guise, like dream material. This suggests a mediatory epistemology: paranormal cognitions often do not provide direct contact with their objects but rely on intermediary processes. Unconscious reception of impressions from the external world (*contact* stage) is followed by intermediary processes that afford opportunities for errors to be made and disguises to be introduced (*modification* stage). The modified material then emerges into consciousness (*emergence* stage). Selection processes could operate at all three stages (Figure 8.1).

Applied to extrovertive experience, the model permits insight and vision into the deeper aspects of the world through expanded selection at the contact stage, but it also admits personal artefacts, religious and cultural conditioning, and even the influence of inherited, collective material, after the manner of, say, Jung's archetypes or Edward Carpenter's Ideas. The mediating subconscious can contain several types of contents that affect mystical experience, ranging from individual memories (personal), through acquired religious and cultural contents (social), to inherited structures (collective). Ultimately, mystical experience brings contact with the deepest facets of reality, but the contact may be mediated rather than direct. The many drug-induced experiences that involve exotic personal, cultural, and mythic imagery possibly draw on the varied contents of an intermediate subconscious. However, direct contact may still be possible if this intermediary can take a back seat. The epistemology would then combine Models A and C of Figure 6.1.

Mind–Body Metaphysics

Huxley's notion of 'Mind at Large' is vague. To make the idea more definite, it is necessary to turn to mind–matter theories. Historically, these theories have no special connection with the study of mystical

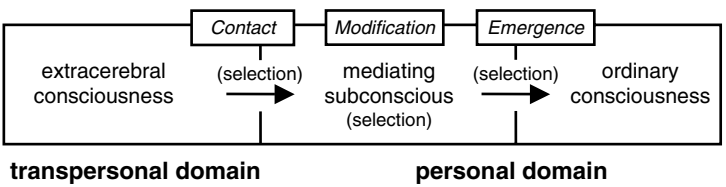

FIGURE 8.1 Stages of selection.

experience. They address the mind–body problem, which in its modern form arose when the external world was made so unlike mind that it became difficult to understand how causal relations between the two are possible. Theorists with an interest in mystical experience may realize that some proposed solutions of the mind–body problem, although not originally intended for the purpose, can be utilized to account for mystical experience. A well-developed psychophysical explanation will not only spell out the *general* relation between the extracerebral consciousness and the natural world by adopting an appropriate mind–matter metaphysics. It will also attempt to explain *specifics*. If consciousness extends beyond the brain, why are we not continuously aware of the world? What precisely does the extracerebral consciousness contribute to extrovertive experience, and how much comes from other factors, intrapersonal or contextual?

In the study of extraordinary experiences, mind–body metaphysics has featured most prominently in parapsychology, raised to account for alleged extensions of consciousness in telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and psychokinesis, and to support the possibility of soul–body separation and post-mortem survival. From its inception, psychical studies attracted the attention of philosophers alert to the relevance of mind–body philosophy. There is good historical reason for the attention: several pioneering investigators, including Henry Sidgwick, Frederic Myers, and Edmund Gurney, undertook their studies in response to Victorian scientific naturalism and associated mind–body theories of a 'materialist' or reductionistic character.[5] These included the epiphenomenalist dualism ('conscious automata' theory) that made consciousness a product of the brain, with no reciprocal action from mind to brain (e.g. Shadworth Hodgson, Douglas Spalding, T. H. Huxley), and the 'mind-stuff' theories that envisaged a compounding of primitive consciousness or preconscious feeling into more complex aggregates (e.g. Herbert Spencer, W. K. Clifford). Paranormal phenomena were of considerable interest because they seemed to be evidence for the existence and causal influence of high-level consciousness in the world beyond the brain. Parapsychological discussions of the mind–body relation have tended to dwell on materialist and dualist alternatives,

[5] In older usage, 'materialism' often refers to the view that mind is a property of the brain, causally dependent on matter. In this sense, epiphenomenal dualism is 'materialism'. On the historical relation between psychical research, scientific naturalism, and mind–body philosophy, see for instance Turner (1974) and Kelly (2001).

although there have been some dual-aspect, neutral monist, and idealist speculations too.[6]

Mind–body metaphysics has figured less prominently in explanations of mystical experience. However, some extrovertive mystical accounts do refer to expansions of consciousness into the natural world and therefore invite psychophysical explanation. For instance, an 'atheist and materialist' was surprised to discover the oneness of mind and universe, a realization that challenged prior materialist assumptions:

> It was as though my mind broke bounds and went on expanding until it merged with the universe. Mind and universe became *one within the other*. Time ceased to exist. It was all one thing and in a state of infinity. . . .
>
> As an atheist and materialist my frame of reference did not provide for an occurrence such as this. I seriously wondered if I had taken leave of my senses. (RERC 1481, in Cohen and Phipps 1979: 173–4)

The account is interesting because it not only describes a unitive expansion of mind but also shows how such an experience may challenge a subject's prior metaphysical outlook.

What philosophical resources are available for psychophysical explanation? Whereas standard forms of materialism, Cartesian dualism, empiricism, and Kantian epistemology put severe restrictions on the reach of consciousness, other philosophies are less prohibitive. Psychophysical explanations of mystical and paranormal phenomena may find inspiration in Spinoza, Leibniz, and Berkeley amongst the earlier critics of materialist and dualist theories, or in Fechner, Mach, Bergson, James, Whitehead, and assorted idealists amongst the later critics. These philosophers, in their different ways, took perception, thought, mind, experience, consciousness, or elementary feeling to be integral to the universe. The late nineteenth century was a fertile period for mind–matter theorizing, which was stimulated by research into the localization of brain function and an increasing awareness of psychosomatic phenomena (Wozniak 1998). Furthermore, the rise of biological evolutionism made the mind–body problem a subject of renewed concern: at what point in the course of biological and cosmic evolution has consciousness appeared in the universe? Has consciousness been there all along, or is it a relatively recent development, appearing with higher

[6] e.g. Nash (1976) on dual-aspect theory, Carington (1949) on neutral monism, Becker (1993: 177–81), Lloyd (1999), and Ellison (2002: 228–37) on idealism. Note also Griffin (1997; 1998: 206–8) on Whiteheadian process philosophy.

animals? By raising the mind–matter relation, psychophysical explanations operate within a specific intellectual context, the ideas and debates that have accompanied the rise of scientific worldviews over the past four hundred years. This 'modern' philosophical setting gives the explanations a secular flavour, although they need not be naturalistic or atheistic, just as the philosophical sources of inspiration were not necessarily naturalistic or atheistic. Berkeley raised his idealist immaterialism in defence of theism, and Leibniz gave his monadology a theocentric character.

Several types of mind–body metaphysics can be used to support the idea of extracerebral consciousness, notably extended dualisms and non-materialist monisms. Whilst dualisms ordinarily restrict mind–matter contacts or correlations to the brains of organisms, more pervasive mind–matter relations can be entertained. Dualisms have often been vague over the nature of the mind–brain relation, which leaves open the possibility of mind–matter contacts in the material world beyond the brain. Theorists have raised modified interactionist dualism to explain paranormal phenomena (Thouless and Wiesner 1947), but as far as I know, dualist theories, whether interactionist or epiphenomenalist, have not been applied specifically to extrovertive experience. An interactionist could suppose that an individual mind expands its range of interaction from its material brain to larger tracts of the material universe, or merges with a pre-existing universal consciousness that has the entire universe as its material partner. An epiphenomenalist could claim that the entire universe, not just human and animal brains, generates consciousness. However, these modified dualist theories would face the same problem encountered by standard dualist metaphysics: How are two very different things to be brought into relation?

Whereas dualisms treat consciousness and matter as radically different, monisms aim to abolish the distinction (Table 8.1). *Materialist monism* is not an obvious candidate for a metaphysics of extracerebral consciousness: it either eliminates consciousness or reduces it to matter. Certainly, eliminative materialists would be unimpressed by the idea of extracerebral consciousness because they reject consciousness altogether, but mind–brain identity materialists may be able to extend their identification of mental states with physical states to regions of the material world beyond the brain. But the more obvious monistic candidates for use in psychophysical explanations are those that unequivocally retain mind, consciousness, or experience as a real existent, without attempting

TABLE 8.1 Basic approaches to the mind–body problem

Approach	Understanding of mind and matter
Dualism	Mind and matter as distinct substances
Materialist monism	Matter as fundamental
Idealist monism	Mind as fundamental
Dual-aspect monism	Mind and matter as distinct aspects
Neutral monism	Mind and matter as derivatives

to reduce it to physical states. These candidates are *idealist monism*, *dual-aspect monism*, and *neutral monism*.

Mention should also be made of phenomenalism and panpsychism, especially the latter. *Phenomenalism* analyses objects into actual or possible sensory experiences, so there is no talk of an external world beyond the phenomena. A phenomenalist explanation of extrovertive experience would most likely utilize a phenomenalist reading of Berkeley's idealism. Stace, we have seen, originally subscribed to a phenomenalist 'God-cell' explanation of mystical experience that could have been developed into an explanation of extrovertive experience. *Panpsychism* attributes mental properties, sentience, consciousness, protoconsciousness, feeling, or experience to the *individual* constituents or units of nature, the bits and pieces that compose the world. It is important to note that panpsychism is not a distinct position on the mind–body problem. There are, for instance, idealist panpsychisms, dual-aspect panpsychisms, neutral monist panpsychisms, process philosophy panpsychisms, and information panpsychisms.[7] Some panpsychisms stumble at the first hurdle, being unable to account for ordinary experience, never mind extrovertive mystical experience. Take, for instance, the 'mind-stuff' theory popular in the late nineteenth century. This is a bottom-up type of panpsychism in which primitive mental units are supposed to agglomerate into the more complex mentality or consciousness that we human beings enjoy. The theory appealed to scientific naturalists, such as W. K. Clifford, because it seemed able to explain how consciousness could arise in the course of cosmic and biological evolution. Crude materialism was unable to give any convincing explanation at all, and traditional idealism relied on an

[7] For introductory and survey studies of panpsychism, see Edwards (1967), Sprigge (1998), Seager (2001), and Skrbina (2003).

active higher mind that was too much like God to be acceptable to naturalists. But mind-stuff theory is faced with the difficulty famously summarized by William James in *The Principles of Psychology*: a hundred separate units of primitive experience will remain a hundred separate units no matter how they are 'shuffled' around ((1890) 1950: i. 158–62). The difficulty, which William Seager has called the 'combination problem' (1995: 279–82), is not faced by panpsychism in the monadological tradition of Leibniz because here a top-down approach is adopted. In Leibnizian monadology, there is no need for compounding because experience is always total and integral, a complete perception of the universe (albeit one with distinct and indistinct aspects), as James realized ((1890) 1950: i. 179–80) and Seager has reiterated (2001).

Panpsychism in the process tradition of Alfred North Whitehead does envisage a compounding of separate experiences but tries to avoid the combination problem: it is insisted that the compound is an entirely new, additional experience, not a conglomeration of the old experiential bits and pieces, as David Ray Griffin has emphasized (1998: 177–81). Griffin also points out that there is a place for cosmic mind in process philosophy (1998: 203–9), but whether a Whiteheadian cosmic mind can shed light on extrovertive experience is best left to specialists to decide, given the obscurity of Whitehead's philosophy. Process philosophy, with its stress on flux and the openness of the future, also has to contend with the eternalistic character of some extrovertive experiences, the sense that all ages exist together in the cosmic whole, with the future just as fully present in each moment as the past. This state of affairs is better represented in the Buddhist Hua-yen philosophy, which drew on the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* and its depictions of all-encompassing visionary experience. In process philosophy, the 'occasions of experience' are fleeting, arising and passing away, and only the past is causally active in the present; in Hua-yen philosophy, all times coexist, and both past and future are causally active in the present (see Odin 1982).

IDEALIST MONISM

Of the monistic positions, idealism has had the most extensive historical links with mysticism. 'Idealism' covers a range of positions, from epistemologies that assert the dependence of knowledge on the human mind (e.g. Kant) to ontologies that take mind to be

more fundamental than matter or which suppose that reality is itself mental (e.g. Berkeley). The pre-eminent example of idealist ontology integrated with mystical soteriology is perhaps the 'realistic idealism' of nondual Kashmir Śaivism, which is theistic as well as idealist.[8] The spiritual practitioner realizes total immersion of self and world in the divine consciousness of the supreme deity Śiva. The idealism is pre-modern, antedating Cartesian dualism by several centuries, and its targets were Indian philosophies that maintained some form of dualism, such as Sāṃkhya (dualism between the witnessing consciousness and Nature) and Advaita Vedānta (dualism between the real *Brahman* and the illusory universe) (see Dyczkowski 1987: 33–46). In the post-Cartesian era, ontological idealisms arose in opposition to mind–body dualism and the concept of matter promulgated by the mechanical philosophers. Although Leibniz and Berkeley did not apply their idealist philosophies to mystical visions of the cosmos, both philosophers entertained the possibility of perceptual expansions, in the evolutionary aspiration of monads towards the all-inclusive, fully conscious, divine perception (Leibniz), and in the post-mortem condition that removes sensory restrictions on the communication of impressions from the divine mind to finite minds (Berkeley).[9]

In the nineteenth century, mysticism and German idealist philosophy had a mutually enriching relationship: mysticism promised to give experiential substance to abstract philosophy, and philosophy drew attention to mystics who would feature prominently in the subsequent study of mysticism. Böhme and Eckhart held particular fascination for Romantic and idealist thinkers, including Franz von Baader, Hegel, Schelling, and Schopenhauer. Several Anglo-American idealists, including Josiah Royce, J. M. E. McTaggart,

[8] Pandey describes the idealism as 'realistic' because the reality of the world is not denied: the world exists as 'a manifestation of the All-inclusive Universal Consciousness or Self' (1963: 320). The application of modern Western philosophical categories to Asian philosophies and indeed to all pre-modern philosophies is a perilous venture, as the continuing debate over Buddhist Yogācāra 'idealism' illustrates (e.g. Sutton 1991: 183–202). If any pre-modern philosophy deserves the 'idealist' label, nondual Kashmir Śaivism must be a strong contender, although even here there has been dissent (e.g. Singh 1982: 6).

[9] For a general discussion of Leibniz and mysticism, see Rutherford (1998). Links between Leibnizian monadology and Jewish mysticism have been explored (e.g. Coudert 1995). On Berkeleian post-mortem expansion of perception, see Berman (1994: 61; 1997). Berman suggests that Berkeley may have performed a hanging experiment on himself to investigate the character of impressions unencumbered by the body (1997: 36–9).

and W. E. Hocking, also took an interest in mysticism, but for encounters between idealist metaphysics and extrovertive mysticism at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is necessary to turn to two socialist, evolutionary thinkers, John Edward Mercer and Edward Carpenter, who were more interested in reaching popular audiences than addressing academic philosophers.

Born in Eccleshill, Bradford, Mercer studied at Oxford and was ordained in 1880. After working in the slum areas of Manchester, he was appointed Bishop of Tasmania in 1902, a post that he held until his return to England in 1914.[10] His writings demonstrate wide reading in the philosophical and scientific thought of the day, which he used to pursue a liberal Christian reconciliation of science and religion through a spiritualization of evolution and matter. Mercer appreciated that several types of metaphysics may be consistent with nature mysticism, but his interest lay in idealism. He had already demonstrated his idealist tendencies in *What is the World External to Mind?* (1905), a popular introduction to idealist metaphysics that ends with an affirmation of the wholeness and unity of the world and its parts. Idealism and mysticism are brought together in *Nature Mysticism* (1913), a work that combines theoretical chapters with a survey of nature myths and poetry organized around such themes as 'Springs and Wells' and 'Seasons, Vegetation, Animals'. Mercer comments that several worldviews may be consistent with nature mysticism, with the exception of outright materialism and the doctrine of the unconditioned Absolute (Mercer's two philosophical *bêtes noires*), and he demonstrates familiarity with several panpsychic thinkers, including Leibniz, Lotze, Paulsen, Royce, James, and the mind-stuff theorists. Mercer's brand of idealism, which he calls 'Ideal-Realism' (1913: 3),[11] accepts the existence of objects external to individual minds but makes them mental in nature. His idealism is therefore of the type that John Foster has called 'mentalistic realism' (1982: 13–14) and Charles Taliaferro 'identity idealism' (1994: 30–1). External objects exist but are mental in nature:

[10] On Mercer's life in England and Tasmania, and his Christian socialism, see Davis (1982; 1983; 1986).

[11] Also 'Idealistic Realism' and 'Realistic Idealism' (Mercer 1917: 214). The term was current in the period, deriving from German philosophy and translating *Ideal-Realismus* (or *Real-Idealismus*, 'real idealism'). See, for instance, Lindsay (1876: 364–5), Eisler (1927), and Brämswig (1976).

> It will be maintained, as a thesis fundamental to Nature Mysticism, that the world of external objects must be essentially of the same essence as the perceiving mind. (Mercer 1913: 3)

For any perception of nature to be possible, ordinary or mystical, the external object must interact with the perceiving mind, and to do so, it must be of a nature similar to the mind (1913: 16–18). Communion with the natural world is possible because the human mind and the external world are 'made of the same stuff': man and nature are expressions of the same mental reality that we find in our experiences of 'consciousness, feeling, will, and reason' (1913: 66–7). Mercer developed his idealism in *The Problem of Creation* (1917), although not specifically for the explication of nature mysticism. Here he describes a cosmic evolutionary process of individual, self-realizing will-centres created by God, the Supreme Monad. The goal of the process, exemplified and advanced by the incarnation of the unique Person, is the development of a cosmic community of personalities, of free, conscious agents 'harmonized in a perfect society' (1917: 303). Mercer's practical socialism, forged amid the deprivations of industrial Manchester, acquired a metaphysical counterpart in his Christian, idealist, evolutionary monadology.

Like Mercer, Edward Carpenter took nineteenth-century mental evolutionism beyond its secular limits by envisaging a mystical flowering of consciousness in a cosmic community of selves, although one without the Christian God and redeemer at its centre. Carpenter also favoured a realist form of idealism, combining it with Hindu notions of subject–object nonduality. Carpenter appears to have had idealist inclinations before cosmic consciousness came to occupy his attention. In 'The Divine Mind and Other Minds', an unpublished manuscript that probably dates from the 1870s, he sketched an idealist philosophy of interrelated minds. At this stage, however, there was no sense that individual minds could attain to the cosmic expansiveness of the divine mind. This, of course, had changed by the time Carpenter wrote *The Art of Creation*. In the intervening years, he had experienced his own mystical opening and had benefited from encounters with Hindu ideas. With cosmic consciousness available to all, the divine mind was democratized. In *The Art of Creation*, Carpenter gives philosophical substance to cosmic consciousness by drawing on idealist arguments, and he appears to take an idealist stance himself. He attempts to cast doubt on the mind-independent reality of matter through an argument inspired

by Berkeley's immaterialism. The existence of anything independent of mind is deemed unthinkable and unimaginable, and so talk about 'dead matter'—matter independent of consciousness—can have no meaning to us and is nonsense (1904*a*: 39–40). We must therefore take something other than dead matter to be the object of our knowledge, and the only thing we can conceive this object to be is another self or mind. Thus, we are compelled to understand the reality that impacts upon us as another self or other selves, a community of communicating selves. In response to criticism, Carpenter (1906*b*) pointed out that he was not attacking the idea of an external world; rather, his target was the belief that the external world consists of mind-independent matter. There is an 'X' behind phenomena, and the 'X' is best understood as other minds or selves. According to Carpenter, this understanding of the external world not only makes sense, unlike the materialist and dualist concept of dead matter, but also allows a real connection between phenomena and the world that supports them.[12]

In the preliminary remarks to *The Art of Creation*, Carpenter seems to advocate a dual-aspect or neutral monism, not idealism. He suggests that it is 'best and simplest to suppose' that mind and matter are 'simultaneous and coextensive', at least provisionally. Although inseparable, they can be distinguished as 'two aspects of the same thing' (1904*a*: 4–6). There is a 'something' or 'Being' that is 'prior to both' and which has mind and matter as aspects. But Carpenter's subsequent discussion suggests that this provisional neutral monist or dual-aspect attitude gives way to a full-blown idealist understanding, for the underlying Being revealed in cosmic consciousness is understood to be a world of intercommunicating selves or minds, not a neutral or dual-aspect substratum. It is also notable that Carpenter is unwilling to reduce the self to a bundle of elements in the stream of experience, in the manner of Jamesian neutral monism (1904*a*: 69–70). For Carpenter, the ego has deep roots in the universal Self. Despite the initial reservation, Carpenter gives an idealist account of cosmic consciousness, even though he recognizes that his argument against a non-mental basis is not decisive.

The combination of nonduality and an idealist critique of matter has appeared more recently in David Loy's discussion of 'nondual

[12] Carpenter's article 'The "X" behind phenomena' (1906*b*) was incorporated into subsequent editions of *The Art of Creation* as a 'Note on Matter' (1907: 45–53).

perception' in his comparative study of Asian philosophies (1988). Loy explains that in nondual perception, no distinction is made between perceiver and perceived, between internal and external, between consciousness and its object. Loy appreciates that idealism provides a basis for understanding nondual perception, and he raises Berkeleian idealist argumentation to contest the existence of material objects independent of consciousness. However, he flirts with phenomenalism, neutral monism, and dual-aspect theory, and in the end he privileges the last for reasons that are not too clear, but which involve the conjecture that sense organs arise through thought-conditioning. It is unclear why idealism could not be used to support the conjecture, as idealism need not question the existence of external sense organs, only their existence as mind-independent objects.

In contrast, Timothy Sprigge's philosophy is unreservedly idealist, and of all the thinkers who have linked idealism with extrovertive mysticism, his exposition of idealist philosophy is the most thorough and sophisticated. In a volume devoted to the justification of a panpsychic, absolute idealism, Sprigge (1983) examines the shortcomings of alternative conceptions of reality, including naive realism, subjective idealism, scientism, and phenomenalism, and he puts forward a series of arguments in favour of panpsychic idealism. The result is a well-elaborated philosophical system that can be applied to a range of issues beyond the mind–body problem. Sprigge has devoted considerable attention to environmental ethics, particularly to animal rights and ecological ethics, for which he establishes a basis using panpsychic idealism. Sprigge's philosophical interest in nature mysticism develops out of a consideration of 'rights' and their grounding in 'intrinsic values', values that are not merely human valuations but real properties of things. He takes consciousness or sentience to be a requisite for intrinsic values: values can exist only in the context of a consciousness, that is, as something felt. It follows that a metaphysics which makes consciousness pervasive, notably idealism, or, even better, panpsychic idealism, will make intrinsic values pervasive too.

Nature mysticism enters Sprigge's considerations when he suggests that empathetic connection or 'rapport' with nature scenery, as expressed by the nature poets, puts subjects in touch with concentrations of feeling intrinsic to the natural world (1984: 457). In Sprigge's panpsychic idealism, some level of feeling or sentience is attributed to the basic units of reality, and higher levels of sentience

are attributed not only to humans and animals but to the universe as a whole (1987: 26). The consciousness associated with the universe can be regarded as a 'super-consciousness' that contains the universe, holding all the smaller consciousnesses together in a unity (1991: 126). Ordinarily we are not aware of the unity, and we suffer from the 'illusion' of separateness, but, in extrovertive experience, the illusion partly lifts, bringing the peace that comes from the relinquishment of the illusion. Like Carpenter, who also raises the 'illusion' of separateness, Sprigge is able to account for some features of extrovertive phenomenology by positing a universal consciousness: the sense of *unity* derives from the discovery of one's integration in the super-consciousness, a discovery that replaces the pain of illusory separation with *peace*.

Sprigge seems to go beyond the rapport explanation when he suggests that the experience may be more than a feeling. Rather, the experience affords direct access to noumenal consciousness itself (1991: 126). All environments have noumenal consciousness, but only certain phenomenal scenes, notably beautiful places, have the effect of lowering the barriers, bringing 'a joyful sense of relief from one's usual egotism and a sense of belonging to something greater than oneself' (1997: 212). Whatever the nature of the contact envisaged by Sprigge, it is clear that his panpsychic idealism allows him to regard extrovertive experience as no mere subjective response to nature. The mystic really does make contact with consciousnesses in the world at large. Feelings of unity with the cosmos are 'cognitively correct' for 'we really are parts of a unitary spiritual whole' (1996: 299).

DUAL-ASPECT AND NEUTRAL MONISMS

According to dual-aspect monists such as Romanes, the universe and its contents possess two aspects of equal ontological status, a physical aspect and a mental aspect. The aspect that is emphasized depends on the way the universe is approached, through introspection or through external observation. Dual-aspect monism has its roots in Spinoza's monistic response to Cartesian dualism: 'thought' and 'extension' are not distinct substances, but two of the infinite modes of the one substance, 'God or Nature'. Gustav Fechner (1801–87) explained dual-aspect monism by means of a circle analogy: a circle is *both* concave and convex, and exhibits one or the other aspect depending on the perspective from which it is viewed.

Similarly, the world is both mental and physical, but it has to be approached from inner or outer standpoints, which have disciplinary equivalents in introspective psychology and physics ((1860) 1966: 1–6). Fechner envisaged mental aspects at all levels, from the mineral and vegetable to the planetary and cosmic, forming a hierarchy of nested consciousnesses. Apart from its attraction to Fechner as a monistic solution to the mind–body problem and as a philosophical background for his psychological psychophysics, dual-aspect monism would have appealed to him because it offered an explanation of his own experiences of transfigured nature, including the vision of the 'soul-life' of plants that marked the resolution of his 'creative illness' in the early 1840s. The vision seemed to reveal that the universe and all its parts have an inner conscious aspect as well as the outer physical aspect investigated by physical science. In *A Pluralistic Universe* (1909), James was attracted by Fechner's dual-aspect philosophy of nested consciousnesses, but his own metaphysical inclinations were neutral monist.

According to neutral monists, the universe is composed of 'neutral' constituents, that is, constituents that are neither mental nor physical in themselves, but which in one way or other lie behind the mental and the physical. It is claimed that the elements (1) combine in different ways to produce mind or matter, and/or (2) come to be labelled 'mental' or 'material' when approached from different disciplinary perspectives. Some neutral monists, including Ernst Mach and Bertrand Russell, used the latter, Fechnerian 'dual-perspective' discourse: the physicist investigates the physical aspects of combined neutral elements, whilst the introspective psychologist is concerned with the mental aspects.[13] Mach's neutral monism is further complicated by its positivism and phenomenalism: he has no stuff or self behind phenomena, just the stream of neutral elements. The elements are sensations: 'For us, colors, sounds, spaces, times . . . are the ultimate elements' (1897: 23). The world consists of complexes of sensation, with no external world beyond them. Like Fechner's advocacy of dual-aspect monism, Mach's progress towards sensationalism seems to have been aided by a non-ordinary experience of the natural world, although less dramatic in Mach's case:

[13] The shared 'dual-perspective' discourse can lead to confusion, with authors using dual-aspect and neutral monist locutions simultaneously and failing to clarify their positions sufficiently. It is, however, worth maintaining the distinction because there is a difference between a basis that is both mental and physical and one that is neither mental nor physical.

> On a bright summer day under the open heaven, the world with my ego suddenly appeared to me as *one* coherent mass of sensations, only more strongly coherent in the ego. (Mach 1897: 23)

At about the age of 15, Mach had become enamoured of Kantian philosophy, but, under the stimulus of the unitive experience and subsequent philosophical reflection, he came to regard the Kantian thing-in-itself (and, later, the transcendental ego) as redundant. Mach's nature experience seems to have contributed towards the development of his phenomenalist neutral monism, although Mach cannot be considered a theorist of extrovertive experience. Still, it is interesting how non-ordinary nature experiences can contribute towards different types of monism, Carpenter's cosmic expansion helping him to develop his idealism, Fechner's visionary experience feeding into dual-aspect theory, and Mach's comparatively undeveloped unitive experience contributing towards a phenomenalist neutral monism.

Bergson's 'image' philosophy is probably best considered a form of neutral monism: he resisted an idealist understanding of his 'images' as mental (1911: viii, 26). Bergson's metaphysics could be applied to expansive visions of the cosmos, but Bergson himself seems to have been reticent to go in this direction, confining his discussions of filtration theory largely to normal and paranormal experiences. When he discussed mysticism at length in the early 1930s, he concerned himself not with extrovertive mystical experience but with contemplative union with God, marked by joy, rapture, luminosity, and love (1935: 196–9). If he had followed Underhill's example by applying his filtration theory to expansive mystical experiences, it is likely that he would have put firm limits on the expansions. Bergson commented that he would not go so far as Leibniz, who claimed that the monads carry 'the conscious or unconscious idea of the totality of the real' (1920: 77). He accepted that 'we perceive virtually many more things than we perceive actually' but stopped short of allowing Leibnizian total virtual perception. Still, in Bergson's philosophy, actual perception of the cosmic totality of images should be possible, but only for a completely passive being, since activity entails the selective elimination of images and a narrowing of perception. By contrast, the conscious perceptions of a Leibnizian monad expand as it becomes more active, approaching an unattainable limit in the omniscience of God.

James's 'radical empiricist' philosophy is also neutral monist: his 'one primal stuff . . . of which everything is composed' is pure experience, a 'collective name' for the great variety of sensible constituents (1904: 478, 487). Drawing upon Eugene Fontinell's work (1986) on James and 'fields of experience', William Barnard (1997: 203–11) has suggested a field theory developed along nondual, radical empiricist lines. James's 'fields of experience' metaphysics, inspired by Fechner, is made consistent with James's radical empiricism, and points of contact are opened with nondual philosophy, including tantric ideas. Barnard suggests that the theory, with its postulation of a multiplicity of shifting experiential domains, can encompass the diversity of mystical experience, acknowledging individual and cultural contributions as well as contributions from the 'deeper' fields of experience that reach beyond individuals and culture.

Bertrand Russell postulated neutral 'sensations', 'percepts', or 'events' as the basis of the physical and mental, and C. D. Broad was open to the idea of a universe of 'sensa', much of which is unsensed. Whereas Russell had no interest in formulating metaphysical explanations of extraordinary experiences, Broad was willing to entertain a Bergsonian-style theory of paranormal phenomena. But in general, neutral monists have not felt the need to trouble themselves with the possibility of expansions of awareness beyond the ordinary range. For instance, Michael Lockwood, inspired by Russellian neutral monism, has proposed shifts of awareness in a world of 'phenomenal qualities', but he limits these shifts to the 'brains of sentient beings', since, 'as far as we know', awareness 'never intrudes' into regions beyond the brain (1989: 162–9). Some extrovertive experiences may, of course, indicate that awareness can go extracerebral.

In Praise of Idealism

Explanations that draw on mind–body philosophies can be assessed on the usual counts: the theories on which the explanations draw, and the explanatory applications of the theories to extrovertive experience. On both counts, I am more than inclined to think that the realist kind of idealism broached by Mercer and Carpenter has greater potential than the alternatives, although I shall not be able to pursue the matter in any depth here. Detailed assessment of

explanations on the first count is out of the question: each mind–body philosophy has attracted a variety of arguments for and against, and each has variants with their own strengths and weaknesses. However, some comments can be made on the challenges faced by each general approach. Assessment on the second count is also difficult to follow up: the existing explanations do not really get to grips with the details of extrovertive phenomenology, and it would be necessary to speculate how theorists might use their preferred mind–body philosophies to shed light on the details of extrovertive phenomenology.

Dualism is beset by the tension that has driven the mind–body debate from its inception: by setting up mind and matter as radically distinct things, dualist theories divide the world into incommensurable realms and make causal interactions between the two inconceivable. For causal relations to be possible, some basic commonality is to be expected, but dualism blocks many possible points of contact between mind and matter because it makes the two very different from each other. In this respect, epiphenomenalist dualism is no advance on interactionist dualism because it leaves the mind–matter division intact and merely restricts causation to one direction, from matter to mind. In occasionalistic and parallelist dualisms, the introduction of a synchronizing entity—historically, a divinity who ensures the coordinated development of the material and mental realms—merely shifts the problem to the entity who mysteriously acts on the two fundamentally different substances. *Dual-aspect theory*, although formally a monism, suffers from a similar problem because it continues to give equal ontological status to the mental and physical, albeit as two aspects of a common reality, rather than as two substances. Fechner's ideal circle combines its concave and convex aspects with ease, but the analogy is strained when applied to the mental and physical. Dualism sets up the two as very different things, and dual-aspect theory takes over the distinction uncritically, unlike the other monistic positions which reduce or eliminate mind, matter, or both. It is incumbent upon the dual-aspect theorist to explain how the two distinct aspects come together in one reality.

One type of *neutral monism* posits a neutral basis that complexifies into mental or physical products, depending on the type of arrangement adopted by the neutral elements or the type of interaction that takes place between them. This is no advance on dualism because it is just as difficult to understand how mind could arise from a truly

neutral basis as from a material basis. More promising are those neutral monisms that take the mental and physical to be mere verbal designations dependent on the manner in which the neutral stuff is described, either introspectively or extrospectively. There is nothing but neutral stuff and its neutral products, which are labelled mental or physical. However, even this form of neutral monism is problematic because the 'neutral' stuff is suspiciously mental: Hume's 'perceptions', Mach's 'sensations', James's 'pure experience', Bergson's 'images', and Russell's 'sensations' or 'percepts'. Neutral monists are challenged to demonstrate that their 'stuff' is truly neutral with respect to both mind and matter. Otherwise neutral monism will be a covert form of idealism or materialism (see Ward 1899: ii. 206–11).

Monistic *materialisms* dispose of the mind–matter distinction, but they do so at great cost by failing to give due recognition to experience, which they either deny outright or reduce to physical states. Materialist approaches have been popular in recent decades even though they fly in the face of the obvious, namely the actuality of experience and its irreducibility to purely physical states. Materialists are hard pressed to demonstrate that there is no such thing as experience or that mental states are nothing but special physical states. *Idealism* is in a much stronger position because it affirms experience and mental phenomena, but despite its philosophical and historical credentials, it has fallen out of favour and is routinely passed over in contemporary mind–body theorizing. One reason for the lack of interest may be the seeming inability of idealists to do justice to the natural world, which science has so impressively investigated. If idealism reduces the physical to the mental, is it able to find a place for scientific depictions of the world? Although idealism can be eliminative, denying the existence of matter and objects external to personal minds, it need not be so. Indeed, the idealist philosophies discussed in the present chapter have a realist orientation. They claim that the objects external to any one consciousness exist in other consciousnesses or in an all-inclusive consciousness—Carpenter's cosmic consciousness, Mercer's ideal-realist external world, Sprigge's super-consciousness.

Still, idealists need to show how the entities described by physical science can be integrated into an idealist framework. The task is far from hopeless for idealist realism, which acknowledges the existence of objects external to personal minds so long as these objects are understood to be mental in nature. Indeed, idealism may provide a better metaphysical foundation for physics than physicalism.

Idealist monadology, with its experiential world-perspectives and interconnected units of nature, seems peculiarly well suited to modern physics, by bringing together relativity and holism in one system (see Marshall 2001). As Stephen Priest remarks, 'Ironically, it might well turn out that, while idealism is compatible with science, materialism is incompatible with science' (1991: 66).

If the obstacles faced by dualisms, dual-aspect theories, and materialisms are as serious as I have made out, then these approaches would have to be ruled out as viable forms of mind–body metaphysics and therefore as suitable foundations on which to build psychophysical explanations of extrovertive experience. Neutral monisms may be thought to stand a chance of success as long as no mysterious transformations of neutral stuff into mind or matter are envisaged, but even then I suspect that a workable neutral monism is liable to collapse into idealism. 'Sensations' or 'experience' hardly pass as neutral elements, despite the claims of neutral monists. Of the mind–matter theories discussed here, idealism emerges as the least objectionable, and so, on philosophical grounds alone, idealism could be regarded as the preferred framework in which experience, ordinary and non-ordinary, and its relation to the world are to be understood. However, my treatment of the mind–matter theories has been somewhat cursory, and it would be premature to rule out the other options without further analysis. Supporters of dualisms, materialisms, dual-aspect theories, and neutral monisms would no doubt claim that the philosophies are reasonable when explained in detail.

Having considered mind–body theories in themselves, we can turn to the explanatory application of the theories to extrovertive experience. In particular, how well do the mind–body theories account for the reported characteristics of extrovertive experience? None of the psychophysical theorists raised in the present chapter were strong on phenomenology. The lack of systematic description means that the relation between extrovertive characteristics and mind–body metaphysics remains largely unexplored. Psychophysical explanations of extrovertive experience are presently underdeveloped but are worth pursuing to see whether they can accommodate and explain the experiential data. Carpenter gives the fullest account, and Sprigge's suggestions about the feelings of unity and peace are along similar lines. Carpenter raises idealism to deny the mind-independence of matter and explain the mystical non-differentiation of subject and object. Idealism allows subject and object to be united in a cosmic

consciousness, and this unity is the way things really are, if only we could appreciate it. Other experiential characteristics follow from the non-differentiation. Love and sympathy follow from the realization of unity with others and the commonality of the Self, and faith, courage, and confidence from the realization that the greater life endures. Knowledge, it would seem, follows from the 'Extension' of self that occurs with the discovery of unity, and is presumably tied up with the mental nature of the world (1904*a*: 217–21).

Carpenter's discussion is fairly brief, but the approach could be deepened and extended to cover the full range of experiential characteristics, including luminous transfigurations and altered temporality. In general, a psychophysical explanation, idealist or otherwise, will account for experiential features by tracing them to the characteristics of the extracerebral consciousness and to the subject's reactions upon contact with the consciousness. Just as Inge could have tried to explain extrovertive phenomenology by pointing to the characteristics of the divine mind, so too psychophysical theorists can look to the characteristics of the extracerebral consciousness posited in the mind–matter theories they employ. Idealist psychophysical theorists, who have the most substantial historical resources on which to draw, could look, for instance, to Berkeley's mind of God, Leibniz's monads, Bradley's unified, timeless Absolute, and even mystically informed, pre-Cartesian metaphysics, such as nondual Kashmir Śaivism and the Plotinian account of the intelligible realm, if these are admitted as idealist.

Of the various monistic psychophysical options, idealism and dual-aspect theory are most able to address the really 'big' extrovertive experiences, the cosmic experiences marked by vastly expanded knowledge, vision, and feeling. Both are able to attribute highly developed noetic and feeling characteristics to the universe as a whole, idealists by treating the universe as the contents of a highly sophisticated mind (e.g. Berkeley's mind of God, Carpenter's universal Self), dual-aspect theorists by giving the universe a highly sophisticated mental aspect (e.g. Fechner's world-soul, Romanes's Superconscious). Neutral monism, in contrast, looks upon the world as essentially neutral in character, neither mental nor physical, but with local complexes of neutral 'sensation' or 'experience' that qualify as either mental or physical. To account for cosmic expansions of knowing, seeing, and feeling, neutral monism would have to envisage a rearrangement of neutral elements throughout the universe to

create the advanced global mind or consciousness for the duration of the cosmic mystical experience. This is problematic for several reasons. For one thing, it is unreasonable to expect the *entire* universe to shift into a sophisticated mental configuration for the duration of a mystical experience and then revert to the prior mixed arrangement as the experience ends. It is notable that mystics sometimes have the feeling that the expansive state of consciousness is already there eternally, needing only to be discovered or rediscovered. It does not need to be brought about by an expansion of awareness into a neutral monist world of unsensed sensa. It is less troublesome and more in accord with the evidence of mystical experience to suppose that the mystic encounters a universe already endowed with sophisticated mind. Idealism or dual-aspect monism is therefore preferable.

As for the unitive characteristics of extrovertive experience, idealism seems best suited to the task. It is true that neutral monism puts the empirical self on the same level as its perceptions by making them both parts of the experiential flow, and it thereby captures one form of mystical unity, illustrated by the youthful Mach's sense that the world and his ego constituted one 'mass of sensations' or Davy's feeling that he was 'part of the series of visible impressions'. But idealism can equally well put the empirical self within the stream of phenomenal experience, and it can go much further too. If elaborated along monadological lines suggested by Plotinian and Leibnizian ideas, idealism can be particularly fertile, bringing together not only the knower and the known in unity but also the multiplicity of knowing minds in community. It can therefore address a range of extrovertive unities, not only subject–object nonduality but also interconnective and communal unities, which can be understood to follow from the mutual representation, knowledge, vision, and love of the multiple minds. Monadological thought fits well with those deeper extrovertive mystical experiences that seem to reach beyond the 'veil' of ordinary sense-perception. Plotinus' intellectual vision, perhaps one historical source of inspiration for Leibniz's monadology, reveals a luminous, transparent cosmos boiling with life, replete with fused, sense-like qualities, and populated by intellects that are whole parts, each containing all the others. Likewise, the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* has a monadological feel, with its portrayal of a vast, bejewelled cosmos ornamented with radiant hues, fragrances, melodious sounds, endless interreflections, and beams of luminosity that contain the numberless universes mirrored within the smallest

particles. In each of these particles, advanced practitioners of the oceanic concentrative state witness the formation, evolution, and destruction of all the world-systems. They also find that the worlds within the tiny particles are themselves made of the tiny particles, suggesting an infinite regress of worlds within worlds.

Traherne's portrayal of the inclusiveness and reciprocity of soul-vision, which pre-dates Leibniz's speculations by just a few years, could be the mystical twin of Leibniz's system of monadic 'living mirrors', as the following passage from the *Centuries* (II. 72) illustrates:

> That one Soul which is the Object of mine, can see all Souls, and all the Secret Chambers, and endless Perfections, in evry Soul: Yea and All Souls with all their Objects in evry Soul. Yet mine can Accompany all these in one Soul: and without Deficiency exceed that Soul, and accompany all these in evry other Soul. (Traherne 1958: 92)

Some modern accounts are also suggestive of a monadological organization of experience. For example, Bernard Roseman's worlds-within-worlds vision at a Navajo peyote ceremony may be a case in point. Roseman's experience seems to have gone trans-sensory, a 'huge velvet curtain' parting to give an intensely dynamic yet 'timeless' experience of the universe in which the sense-qualities merged and the parts were found to be wholes:

> The universe was enclosed in a huge round dome and contained millions of replicas of the same world, each representing a different plane of consciousness. . . . At long last I knew the relation all things had for one another!
>
> All objects seemed to be complete in themselves; as I searched the depth of an object I would see many worlds buried in it. And as I examined each world, I saw that each had objects of its own which were seen as worlds and objects endlessly. (Roseman 1968: 19–20; see Merkur 1998: 123–4)

If Plotinus, Traherne, and the authors of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* drew upon their own mystical experiences, as they almost certainly did, there is reason to pay special attention to a monadological form of idealism. The fact that modern physics is also suggestive of a monadic world-structure makes this type of approach even more interesting. It has sometimes been observed that the universe of modern physics has resonances with mystical and monadological worldviews, and the matter is worth pursuing here a little further.[14]

[14] See for instance Capra (1975), Wilber (1982), Marshall (1992; 2001), and Ellwood (1999: 112–16). For Traherne's monadological soul-vision and other historical cases, see Marshall (1992: 278–90).

A Metaphysical Suggestion

Metaphysics, as speculative enquiry into the nature of reality, tends to be overly abstract and conjectural, and mystical experience, as supposed contact with reality, raises more questions than it answers. There is opportunity for mutual enrichment, with mind–body philosophy supplying a metaphysical framework for understanding extrovertive experience, and extrovertive experience providing empirical data for the guidance and refinement of metaphysics. In this concluding section, I shall suggest how one type of metaphysics could draw upon mystical insights and in turn provide a basis for understanding the experiences. The metaphysics in question is idealism, which has emerged as a particularly attractive option. It not only offers a coherent approach to the mind–body problem but also copes well with extrovertive phenomenology. A monadological form of idealism seems to be especially promising if we take seriously the suggestions of a holistic, interpenetrating universe to be found in some mystical accounts and in modern physics.

My suggestion is that an idealism roughly along the lines advanced by Berkeley and Leibniz, if suitably modified in the light of mystical experience and modern science, may provide a good metaphysical basis for understanding extrovertive experiences. This is not the place to go into the philosophical details, but the idealism would be *realist* in its attitude towards the external world, *representative* in its theory of perception, and *monadological* in its theory of matter and the finer details of experiential organization (see Marshall 2001). There is no need for idealism to dispute the realist contention that the natural world exists independently of our phenomenal experiences. Idealists can accept that the universe of structures and processes investigated by physical and biological sciences—from galaxies, stars, and planets down to rocks, trees, bodies, sense organs, brains, molecules, atoms, subatomic particles—really does exist. Dualisms and materialisms consider this universe to be purely material, but in the proposed idealism the universe is taken to be mental in nature, to be the noumenal contents of a great mind. So far the picture is not so different from Berkeley's idealism in its less phenomenalist, more realist moments, when Berkeley gave objects an independent and enduring existence as archetypal ideas in the mind of God (see, for instance, John Foster 1982; 1985). By advocating a realist form of idealism in the context of extrovertive mystical experience, I join company with Carpenter and Mercer.

But the proposed idealism departs from Berkeley's in significant ways. In Berkeley's philosophy, the world consists of minds and their ideas: there are our finite, created minds, and there is the infinite, divine mind that feeds our finite minds with their perceptual contents, with their 'ideas of sense'. In a realist interpretation of Berkeley's idealism, these implanted, sensible ideas represent contents of the divine mind (Figure 8.2). The theory of perception is unattractive because it makes the sense organs, nervous system, and brain somewhat redundant in the perceptual process. For Berkeley, the contents, orderliness, and coherence of our perceptions are a direct result of the will and activity of God. Whenever we see a tree, God is directly producing visual impressions of the tree in our finite minds, *as if* we were seeing the tree as a result of the activity of the senses, nervous system, and brain. But in reality the tree, sense organs, nervous system, and brain play no direct causal role in the proceedings. God is the direct cause. And Berkeley's external world, stashed away in the mind of God, is rather disconnected from the finite minds, with the result that our perceptual experiences are not continuous with the rest of the world. In themselves, the finite minds are pretty shallow things, with very limited ideas of sense and imagination. The bulk of the world exists elsewhere, in the divine mind.

To present a more unified picture of the world and to give external objects, sense organs, and the nervous system the direct causal role

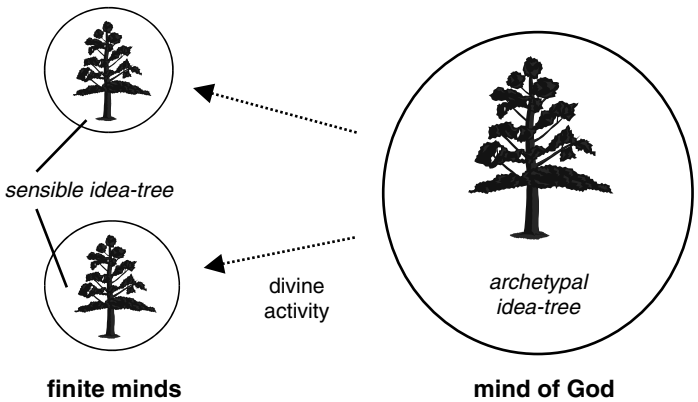

FIGURE 8.2 Berkeleian 'representative realism': sensible ideas implanted by God in the finite minds represent ideas in the divine mind.

in perception that they seem to demand, it can be supposed instead that the finite minds are not distinct from the great mind but are special parts or subdomains of it, and that a straightforward representative theory of perception suffices to explain how perceptual experiences of external objects come about. Consider the visual perception of the tree. In the kind of representative theory taken for granted by many scientists, phenomenal representations of the external tree arise in the following way. Electromagnetic radiation from the surface of a purely material tree is picked up by the material eyes and focused as images on the retinas. Electrical signals proceed from the retinal neurons along the optic nerves to the lateral geniculate nucleus of the thalamus and on to the rest of the material brain, where complex processing takes place in the visual cortex and other cerebral structures. At the end of the causal chain, there arise sense-experiences that include representations of the tree. For mind–body dualists, these sense-experiences take place in minds distinct from the physical world (Figure 8.3). This causal and representative theory, with its chains of events leading from physical objects to mental representations, has its attractions, for it readily makes sense of several phenomena, including hallucinations, the relativity of perceptions, and time lags between perceptual contents, say, between lightning flashes and thunder claps (e.g. Harrison 1993:

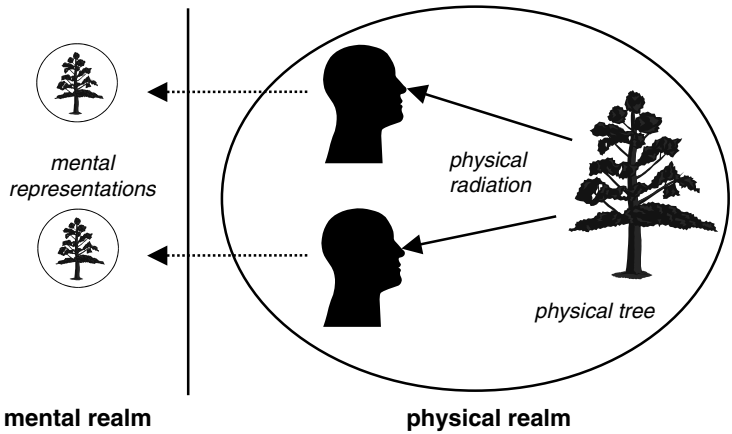

FIGURE 8.3 Standard representative realism in dualist mode: *material* objects, sense organs, and the brain play a direct role in the process of representation.

17–20). Furthermore, many of the criticisms levelled against the representative theory by philosophers, such as the accusation that it exacerbates scepticism by making the external world unknowable, are not at all convincing (see, for instance, Jackson 1977: 138–54; Harrison 1993: 20–37; Smythies 1994: 107–19). But to avoid the problematic split inherent in the dualist version of the representative theory, with its mysterious leap from purely physical brain states to mental sense-experiences, we can transpose the theory to an idealist key by taking everything to be the contents of mind. The external tree, sense organs, brain, and the rest of the universe now exist as noumenal contents of the great mind. Causal chains of events proceed *within* this mind, leading from the noumenal tree, through the noumenal sense organs, to the noumenal brain, where a representation of the tree is pieced together as a special kind of experiential content, a phenomenal experience (Figure 8.4). Note that all this takes place in the great mind's field of experience. The noumenal tree, radiation, eyes, retinas, nerve signals, and brain structures, and the phenomenal representations of the tree that develop in the noumenal brain are all parts of the experiential universe, a universe that exists as the contents of the great mind. Thus, experience is not created by the brain, for the entire universe is experience. Rather, brains are special sites in the universe at which experience takes on phenomenal characteristics.

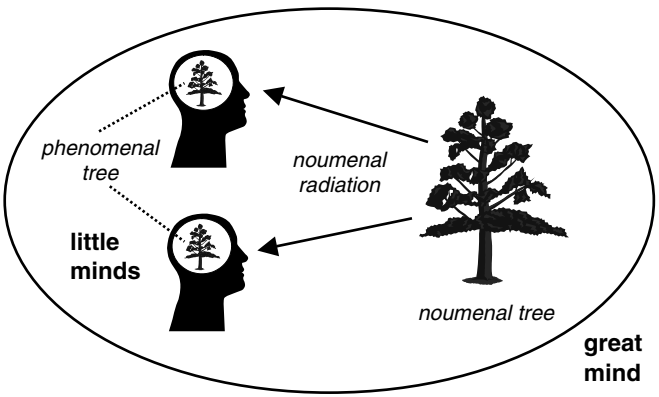

FIGURE 8.4 Standard representative realism made idealist: *noumenal* objects, sense organs, and the brain play a direct role in the process of representation.

Finally, the proposed idealism adopts a monadological organization of experience. There is not just one great mind with its noumenal and phenomenal contents but a plurality of similar minds with their cosmic contents organized from centres of experience. In effect, each one of us is *individually* endowed with the great mind and its contents, or as Traherne puts it, each one of us is a 'Sole Heir of the whole World' (*Centuries* I. 29), not God Himself but made in the divine image and therefore in possession of the all-inclusive knowledge, vision, and love of the divine mind. Each great mind has the universe as its noumenal contents, but the minds differ by expressing the universe from their individual vantage points. They can do so because they are all manifestations of a common, unifying ground. Matter is understood in experiential terms: the basic unit of matter consists of the representation of one complete mind in another complete mind. Matter is an aggregate of minds, or better, a representation of groups of minds in one mind.

The scheme is essentially Leibnizian, although there are some significant points of departure inspired by mystical hints and modern physics:

1. *Monads are spatio-temporally inclusive.* Each state of a Leibnizian monad represents the present state of the universe, but there is reason to speculate that each monadic state contains the spatio-temporal whole from its particular vantage point. There are some empirical avenues towards this speculation, including relativistic physics, which dispenses with the classical notion of simultaneity and therefore makes it meaningless to talk about a 'present state' of the universe. One way to interpret the physics is to suppose that all events coexist in a spacetime whole. Mystical experiences can also give the impression that all 'times' and 'places' exist together in a whole, in an all-encompassing 'Eternal Now' (see Chapter 2).

2. *Represented monads are extended.* It is not clear to me how Leibniz understood the representation of other monads in one monad. They may be represented as dimensionless points because Leibniz regarded monads as unextended. However, it may be productive to make the representations of the 'guest' monads complete, with their extended contents represented as extended in the 'host' monad. The effect is to embed a multiplicity of full experiences of the universe in each full experience. In physical terms, the spacetime whole contains embedded spacetime micro-representations of itself, and these are the fundamental particles

of the system. The entire universe is contained locally in each basic particle and therefore exerts an influence locally. The idea has the advantage of bringing together the holism and relativity of modern physics. Again, there are some mystical indications of a worlds-within-worlds structuring of experience, as we saw above. The mystic discovers that the basic parts contain the cosmic whole.

3. *Each monad has fully distinct experiences of the entire world.* A Leibnizian monad represents the entire universe, but much of the representation is very confused (*Monadology* 60). The universe is perceived indistinctly by a monad through the small part of the world that it does perceive distinctly, namely the monad's representations of its immediate body of monads (*Monadology* 62). Leibniz says that if representation of the world were not largely confused each monad would be a deity, and, unlike the mystically inspired Traherne, he is not willing to attribute distinct perception of everything to a being other than God. However, some extrovertive mystical experiences may lead us to think otherwise and attribute total knowledge and vision of the universe to every monad. We can suppose that every monad contains the world in all its distinct detail. Thus, unlike Leibniz, I make a distinction between the *comparatively unclear phenomenal experiences* that our bodies give us through our nervous systems and the *extremely clear noumenal experiences* that we sometimes access in mystical states.

Panpsychic idealism in this vein has several points in its favour, including the idealist circumvention of two problems that have taxed mind–body philosophers: how to derive experience from a non-experiential world and how to combine bits of experience into more complex experiences, the 'generation problem' and the 'combination problem' respectively (Seager 1995; 1999). These problems are avoided because the idea of a non-experiential world is rejected and no compounding of separate bits of experience is envisaged. The world is experiential through and through, and experience is always total and integral. This form of idealism also has potential as a metaphysical framework for modern physics, but for the present purpose, which is the explanation of extrovertive mystical experience, it is sufficient to recall that the metaphysics posits a plurality of complete minds, each of which incorporates two basic types of content-rich experience. There is phenomenal experience, which

has a very limited scope and a pronounced transient quality. It is representational in its perceptual contents, fed by the senses and the nervous system in the case of higher organisms. This is our familiar experience. There is also noumenal experience, which is perfectly clear, luminous, highly noetic, fully detailed, and temporally inclusive. It has the entire spatio-temporal universe as its contents, including the noumenal brains of organisms in which phenomenal experiences develop.

Now we can suppose that this ever-present noumenal background to our phenomenal experiences is responsible for the more developed extrovertive experiences. In the simplest extrovertive cases, the noumenal background is not strongly felt: the stream of phenomenal experience becomes nondual through a relaxation of sharp self–other distinctions, so that the everyday self and body are felt to be an integral part of the stream. This is the mild nondual awareness discussed by Sallie B. King, Richard H. Jones, and many others, an awareness that brings a sense of unity, perceptual clarity, living in the 'now', peace, and joy, but no dramatic transformations. In the more developed cases, the phenomenal stream begins to reveal its noumenal bedrock, bringing luminous transfigurations of phenomenal contents, more advanced feelings of unity, a growing sense of meaning and knowledge, significantly altered time-experience, and so forth. In the profoundest cases, the noumenal background comes to the fore, blotting out phenomenal experience, resting alongside it, or containing it. When mystics experience all-encompassing unity, knowledge, cosmic vision, eternity, and love, they have accessed the pellucid depths of their own monadic minds.

Of course, the suggestion is highly speculative and in need of detailed elaboration, with closer attention to the origins of extrovertive characteristics in the hypothesized noumenal level of mind. For instance, we would want to know how the different experiences of time at the phenomenal and noumenal levels relate to each other, and how the variety and opacity of phenomenal colours derive from the transparent luminosity of their noumenal basis. And the metaphysics itself requires elaboration: only the bare bones have been intimated above. Understandably, the suggestion will appear fanciful to many, just as Berkeley's immaterialism and Leibniz's monadology have appeared fanciful to generations of philosophers, but the peculiarity of the metaphysics merely reflects the peculiarities of the mystical experiences and physical effects (relativistic and quantum) it seeks to address. If the phenomena are taken seriously, then

any metaphysics that tries to make sense of them will almost certainly appear strange.

Perhaps in the above speculations we have the outline of one type of metaphysics that can be profitably incorporated in a full-blown explanation of extrovertive mystical experience. But it is important to stress that the metaphysics would be just one component of the overall explanation, for there would still be room for contributions from other sources, including intrapersonal biology and psychology, inherited collective ideas, and acquired religious and cultural materials. For instance, neuroscience and psychology would be called upon to shed light on such matters as the construction of phenomenal experience in the noumenal brain, the changes in the phenomenal–noumenal interface when extrovertive experience takes place, and the memory processes that allow us to remember something of our ventures into the noumenal depths of mind.

9
Fashions, Failures, Prospects

Like all fields of scholarly endeavour, the study of extrovertive mystical experience has been influenced throughout its development by intellectual fashions. Several have come to our attention: Romanticism, idealism, evolutionism, liberal Christian immanentism, pantheism, psychoanalysis, transcendentalizing theology, spirit–nature separationism, psychological and social constructivism, and, increasingly, neuropsychology. Intellectual fashions are inevitable and often valuable for the new avenues of exploration they open up, but individually they can be restrictive, leading study down narrow and sometimes barren paths. Nevertheless, it is to be hoped that in the long run the twists and turns of fashion will lead to fuller understanding by expanding the range of ideas available. After a hundred years of explanatory efforts, there are some promising ideas at our disposal. Still, it looks as if there is some way to go before extrovertive mystical experience will be properly understood.

Progress will depend in part on a real effort to engage with the data of extrovertive experience. Explanatory attempts have often been dominated by preconceived ideas. There is nothing amiss in employing the theoretical resources at hand to develop explanations: indeed, it is a standard feature of the explanatory enterprise to draw upon pre-existing theoretical systems. Problems arise when theories are applied without sensitivity to the phenomena under investigation. Too many theorists raised in the present study paid insufficient attention to the experiential evidence and allowed their theoretical allegiances to dictate explanation. Theorists should feel able to draw on their specialities, but they must take steps to test their ideas against relevant data. The importance of adequate characterization cannot be overemphasized. Theorists failed to examine extrovertive accounts, relied on abstract mystical philosophy for their data, allowed their own experiences to bias the selection and analysis of data, and overlooked prominent features or variants. Modern contextualist and neuropsychological theories of mystical experience

have been no better in this respect. It has not been my intention to offer a new characterization in the present study, just to complicate existing characterizations to aid the evaluation of explanations. However, further progress is likely to depend in part on the accumulation and analysis of data, particularly accounts rich in detail, accounts of the less common variations, such as mystical visions of the cosmos, and accounts derived from non-Western cultures. The circumstances and consequences of extrovertive experience require further study, and quantitative work on demography and phenomenology is almost virgin territory.

Definitive characterization and the identification of distinct sub-types or stages will probably be forthcoming only when explanation is more advanced. On the one hand, it may turn out that superficially similar experiences are unrelated at a deeper level, having different causes and requiring different explanations. On the other hand, the development of experiences through stages with varied phenomenologies suggests that superficially different experiences may be related at a deeper level and therefore stem from the same causes. Caution is needed in the identification of sub-types, and I have been reluctant to proceed very far in this direction. However, one possible distinction concerns the perception of nature contents: many extrovertive experiences keep to the familiar, sensory field, often with changes in illumination, whereas some go beyond the field, suggesting hallucination, creative imagination, or even trans-sensory perception.

Although the essential nature of extrovertive mystical experience remains uncertain, there are some conclusions that can be drawn. Several explanations can be considered 'failures' because they are incapable of explaining the characteristics. Amongst these, I would include Stace's explanations, Zaehner's 'mania' and 'impersonal force' explanations, Freud's account of the 'oceanic feeling', and simple regression and deconstruction theories in general. Some of these explanations may be suitable for very simple, underdeveloped, or atypical cases, but in general they fail to account for the range of extrovertive characteristics. In this category, I would also include any explanation that attempts to reduce extrovertive experience to its religious and cultural contexts.

Creed and Culture

We have seen that one influential school of thought takes mystical experience to be thoroughly conditioned by doctrinal and cultural

context. Mystical experience is not merely coloured by contextual contributions: it is 'shaped', 'over-determined', even 'created' by them. Nothing significant would remain if the doctrinal and cultural contents were removed from mystical experience. Radical contextualists have not attended specifically to extrovertive experiences. They seem to have taken it for granted that the experiences are no exception and require no special consideration. A mystical experience of the world would, like other mystical experiences, be put down to teaching and training: the subject is well drilled in ideas about the natural world, has heard exemplary stories about the experiences, and engages in practices that help to fashion the ideas into an experience.

The contextual thesis is not nearly as self-evident as some of its proponents have believed. Radical contextualists drew upon post-war perceptual constructivism selectively and uncritically. The conclusion that mystical experience is fundamentally conditioned was far from inevitable. Other theorists, such as Deikman and Ornstein, had been inspired by the same psychological constructivism but reached a very different conclusion. In their view, ordinary experience is conditioned, but meditative training can break through the conditioning or bring a reconditioning that allows a clearer view of things. Certainly, many circumstances of extrovertive experience point to a deconditioning or disruption of the self–other constructions that ordinarily condition experience. Even Hanson, one of the philosophers of science who had promoted the idea of theory-laden observation, was willing to allow moments of perception in which conceptual organization weakens. It is far from self-evident that human beings must always view the world through conditioning lenses of belief and culture. Indeed, some mystical experiences may be evidence that the habitual grip of conceptual organization can relax.

There is good reason to believe that extrovertive experiences are no mere product of contextual shaping. The experiences frequently take place outside any clear tradition of teaching and practice. Subjects often have no prior knowledge of the experiences, which can come as a complete surprise. Experiences can show considerable novelty and context-disparity. Particularly impressive are the cases of young children, for whom rigorous indoctrination, enculturation, and training are most unlikely. It is an important feature of the contextualist case that substantial learning and practice are necessary preparation for the experiences. If simple exposure to beliefs were sufficient, mystical experiences would be everyday occurrences.

Although it is unlikely that contextual contributions make up the core of extrovertive experience, they should be granted a supporting role, for they undoubtedly influence the manner in which subjects interpret, express, and respond to their experiences, and they can furnish facilitative environments and practices. Context no doubt supplies core material in some cases, notably the imagery of some experiences associated with drug and near-death circumstances.

Psychology and Biology

If contextual contributions cannot be accepted as fundamental, then it might be supposed that intrapersonal contributions determine much of the core experience. Extrovertive experience is essentially a product of innate biology and psychology as understood by naturalistic science. Context influences peripheral aspects and sometimes the noetic and visionary contents, but intrapersonal factors dictate the basic phenomenology. Subjects experience a special light not because they have been taught to experience the light but because certain neurological and psychological processes operate in abnormal or enhanced ways to generate the luminosity. Clearly, the thesis is not troubled by novelty, context-disparity, and the experiences of young children. Mystical experience derives primarily from human biological and psychological processes, and so it need not conform to prior understandings derived from creed and culture. There will be conformity only if religious and cultural understandings accurately reflect the innately determined character of the experience.

In their present state of development, none of the intrapersonal explanations surveyed in Chapter 7 offer a convincing account. Of Zaehner's suggestions, the inner-image explanation is the most promising, but we have seen that it would have to be developed further for it to account for extrovertive phenomenology, with cognitive psychology and neuroscience supplying the missing pieces. Freud's explanation addresses feelings of incorporative unity and could be elaborated to explain some simple aspects of altered temporality, but it is difficult to see how a theory of infantile ideation could be elaborated to cover the complex noetic, unitive, temporal, emotional, and visual features, unless the infant's mind were attributed a pre-existing psychic dimension of great complexity and order, an option that is not contemplated in classical psychoanalysis.

The object-relations explanation was more sophisticated but had very little to contribute to an understanding of extrovertive phenomenology, although object-relations theorists may have something valuable to say about the functional value of mystical experience as reparative or transformative. Neuropsychological explanations build on clinical observations of considerable interest but at present they cannot be regarded as anything more than preliminary guesses. There is some correlative evidence of a connection between the brain and mystical states of consciousness, but the nature of the link is far from clear. This is hardly surprising: even the neural correlates of ordinary consciousness, which are far easier to study than extraordinary states, are still poorly understood. The insufficiency of existing explanations should not be taken to mean that a satisfactory naturalistic explanation is unattainable, but the insufficiency does leave room for transpersonal possibilities.

A Transpersonal Basis

Some explanations invoke spiritual presences or extracerebral consciousness to explain extrovertive mystical experience. The experience is in essence transpersonal, reaching beyond the individual in ways that are not allowed by naturalistic science. Innate biological and psychological factors can still be given a role, but they do not lie at the heart of extrovertive experience. Likewise, contextual contributions are admitted, but the basic phenomenology is primarily transpersonal in origin. Mystics experience a special light because changes to their neurophysiology or habitual mind-sets allow them to make contact with, say, the luminosity of a divine presence or the luminous depths of mind. Context influences the interpretation of the luminosity but does not create the light. Luminosity appears because it is a characteristic of deeper realities.

We saw that transpersonal explanations have exhibited a weakness common to all the explanatory efforts raised in the study—a lack of detailed attention to phenomenology. Some transpersonal explanations have potential for improvement in this area. For instance, Inge could have strengthened his case by showing how extrovertive characteristics follow from the characteristics of the Neoplatonic divine mind. Likewise, psychophysical theorists, such as Carpenter and Mercer, could have developed their explanations by showing in greater detail how extrovertive characteristics follow

from the characteristics of the idealist universe they posited. In contrast, Stace's Explanation-A has little room for development: the empty consciousness that Stace takes to be the mystical essence of extrovertive experience is not helpful for explaining rich extrovertive phenomenology. For his explanation to work, Stace had to ignore some striking extrovertive characteristics, including luminosity, temporal inclusivity, and the noetic features.

Like intrapersonal explanation, transpersonal explanation has advantages over contextual explanation. By grounding extrovertive experience in a cross-cultural, transhistorical basis, the explanations are not undermined by novelty and context-disparity. Furthermore, transpersonal explanations—if sufficiently well developed—can address the basic features of extrovertive phenomenology. A theistic explanation could trace luminosity, temporal inclusivity, omniscience, and love to the mystic's contact with the mind of God, which is attributed all these qualities. Attaining union with the divine mind, the mystic experiences the world as God experiences it. This kind of explanation may appeal to those who believe in God or a divine mind, but for modern audiences the psychophysical varieties of transpersonal explanation may be more interesting. Psychophysical explanations have contemporary relevance because they take off from the mind–body problem, a pressing issue for philosophers, psychologists, and neuroscientists. An especially fertile option is psychophysical explanation that incorporates a filtration theory. Although currently underdeveloped, filtration theories are interesting for several reasons. They can give neuropsychological processes a role in mystical experience, as the evidence seems to demand, without requiring that the processes are chiefly responsible for the experiences. As William James and his friends realized, filtration theories expose the common epiphenomenalist assumption by raising an alternative possibility. A hundred years on, scientists and philosophers regularly assume that the brain 'produces', 'creates', or 'causes' consciousness, without realizing that the brain may merely condition or modify it.

Filtration theories can also explain why highly varied circumstances lead to similar experiences. Anything that interferes with filter operation can unlock hidden contents. It is therefore unsurprising if mystical experiences are sometimes associated with drug-induced states, organic disorders, and mental illnesses, as well as with perfectly ordinary circumstances, such as a relaxed state of mind or a feeling of loving concern. It is an important feature of filtration

theories that they look upon the precipitating stimulus as somewhat incidental: it unlocks rather than creates. Differences between experiences can be put down to the side effects of stimuli and to the different ways in which they interrupt filter operation, say, smoothly in controlled meditative practice or chaotically in illness and drug-induced states. Keys and sledgehammers open doors, but with rather different results.

Filtration theories, particularly multi-stage models, may be useful for explaining types and stages of mystical experience. In full-blown experiences, the barriers are down and the mediating subconscious takes a back seat; in less developed experiences, some barriers are still up and the mediating subconscious makes substantial contributions from its personal, cultural, and collective contents. Filtration theories also provide a way of integrating the various kinds of contributions to mystical experience: theories can combine a transpersonal source, such as the extracerebral consciousness of Chapter 8, an intrapersonal filter (neurological and psychological processes), and contextual and collective contributions (symbols, images, beliefs) through the influence of the mediating subconscious. Filtration theories also have considerable subsumptive power, a feature that attracted early theorists such as James and Myers. A broad range of experiences, normal, abnormal, and supernormal, are brought together in one model. Filtration theories have potential, but the challenge is to construct a well-elaborated explanation that goes beyond the functional emphasis of earlier attempts and addresses the metaphysical and neuropsychological aspects. What is Mind at Large? How is it 'filtered' by biological and psychological processes to yield various kinds of experiences, ordinary, paranormal, and mystical?

Choosing between Alternatives

Two general approaches have emerged as tenable, centred respectively on (1) intrapersonal factors and (2) transpersonal factors, with each incorporating contextual contributions in a supporting role. The former approach will appeal to theorists who are confident in the explanatory power of mainstream physiological and psychological sciences, in their present form or in some more advanced form developed along similar lines. The latter will appeal to theorists who are willing to entertain entities and processes outside the

bounds of naturalistic science, such as spiritual presences and extracerebral consciousness. Must the choice between the two general positions hinge on personal preference or prejudice, or can one position be shown superior? There are several developments that could sway the case in one direction or the other. For instance, it is possible that advances in neuroscience will help to settle the matter. At present, understanding of the brain is fairly primitive, but it is likely that the neuroscience of the future will provide more sophisticated understandings. When brain function is understood in greater detail, it may be possible to say with confidence that intrapersonal factors are primary. Alternatively, neuroscientific advances may help confirm the view that the nervous system acts as a filter in its perceptual operations, as Bergson and Huxley had supposed, in which case transpersonal explanation would be favoured. Research in the field of near-death studies has indeed suggested that consciousness is not so closely tied to the brain as many have supposed. Some cardiac arrest patients seem to have cognitive experiences even when the cerebral cortex shows no signs of electrical activity (Parnia *et al.* 2001; van Lommel *et al.* 2001; Parnia and Fenwick 2002). Further research along these lines may help to establish whether the brain produces consciousness or merely conditions it.

Mystical experiences often have 'cognitive pretensions': subjects believe that their experiences bring insights into reality (Wainwright 1981: xiv). In the case of extrovertive experience, noetic contents can include insights into structures and processes in the natural world. It is possible that these insights could be measured against scientific understandings of nature. Transpersonal explanation would then be open to testing. If extrovertive mystics really do gain access to the world at large, then their insights should, in principle, agree with scientific discoveries. The situation is roughly comparable to the investigation of some paranormal phenomena: telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, and out-of-the-body experience also yield testable cognitive claims, although the mystical case is not so easy to follow up. Experiments can be conducted to explore paranormal access to the world, even if the results have often been unclear or disputed. The options for testing extrovertive mystical access to the world are much more limited, and will, for the most part, depend on information gleaned from mystical testimonies rather than from controlled experiments. Unfortunately, many accounts are lacking in the detail that would make comparison with scientific knowledge

possible. However, there are some detailed accounts, and these may provide suitable material for comparison.

Even if extrovertive mystics really do have intuitive access to the world at large and are able to report their observations in detail, their insights may not match those of physical theory in its current form. Scientific investigation of the natural world, from the fundamental constituents of matter to cosmological structures, is an ongoing enterprise and has yet to furnish a definitive account. Theories have been improving, but they are still provisional and could change in drastic ways. Indeed, mystical insights that reproduce the provisional scientific understandings of the day very closely should be treated with special caution. They may simply embody contextually derived material, employ contextual material in a symbolic way, or contain post-experience interpretations. Nevertheless, comparison of mystical and scientific insights could be one means of deciding between intrapersonal and transpersonal explanations, so long as the work is undertaken with awareness of the many pitfalls faced by comparative efforts. As the popular science–mysticism literature has demonstrated, it is all too easy to draw superficial parallels between modern physics and mystical philosophies. But if the careful study of mystical accounts suggests that mystics can gain insights into natural structures and transformations, then the transpersonal case would become very strong. The case would also be strengthened if the cognitive claims of related experiences, such as telepathic, clairvoyant, precognitive, and out-of-the-body experiences, were vindicated, demonstrating that non-standard forms of contact with the world are possible. The cognitive claims of telepathy, clairvoyance, and precognition are often very specific and are therefore more easily tested than the general insights into world structure and process furnished by some extrovertive experiences.

Progress on the mind–body problem and the philosophy of perception would also be helpful. If it were demonstrated that, say, dual-aspect theory or idealism has overwhelming advantages as a solution to the mind–body problem, then there would be grounds for believing that consciousness really does exist in the world at large. In turn, transpersonal explanations that call upon extracerebral consciousness would become all the more plausible. Alternatively, if a strong case could be made for standard materialisms or dualisms, then extrovertive explanations that depend on extracerebral consciousness would be less attractive. For my part, I find materialisms and dualisms unattractive because they preserve in one

way or another a problematic understanding of matter that has held sway for several hundred years. In the early days of modern science, there was great benefit to be had from directing attention at the readily quantifiable properties of things, at the *motions* of objects. But the mechanical philosophers turned a fruitful research strategy into a dogmatic metaphysical stance when they asserted that the external world consists of nothing but corpuscles of matter and the void in which they move. Deprived of qualities other than those open to simple quantification, matter and the external world were divorced from mind. It is true that scientific conceptions of matter, space, and time have undergone major changes since the seventeenth century, but the old, denuded picture of the external world persists, and so too the problematic split between mind and matter. Mystical experiences of the natural world are likely to become more comprehensible when barren conceptions of the external world are relinquished, and my inclination is to side with those idealists, dual-aspect theorists, neutral monists, and process philosophers who have questioned the exclusion of sensible qualities from the world at large. In Chapter 8, I expressed my preference for a realist form of idealism and went so far as to sketch a panpsychic idealism that may be particularly fruitful.

Given the often inconclusive meanderings of philosophical debate, it would be exceedingly optimistic to hope that purely philosophical arguments will establish panpsychic idealism or any other mind–body theory over its rivals, or show that one philosophical theory of perception, such as the representative theory, is indisputably superior to the others. Lasting progress is more likely to come from philosophical argument in conjunction with evidence from other fields, including neuroscience and physics. It may turn out that some puzzling features of the natural world uncovered by modern physics—notably Einsteinian relativity of motion and the holistic interconnectedness suggested by quantum physics—are explicable only within a metaphysical framework that gives experience or mind a fundamental role in nature, such as Whiteheadian process philosophy or panpsychic idealism. Metaphysics that proposes a monadological organization of experience is especially well suited to the relativity and holism of modern physics, and it may turn out that physics makes most sense in a monadological framework. Physics was the route by which mind was excluded from conceptions of the world at large, and physics may be the route by which mind finds its way back in.

At the end of our trek through a hundred years of explanations, the essential nature of extrovertive mystical experience remains uncertain, if no longer entirely mysterious. We have entertained an assortment of ideas, contextual, intrapersonal, and transpersonal, that may shed light on the experiences, although at present we cannot be sure which ideas reach to the heart of the matter. Is extrovertive experience susceptible to purely naturalistic explanation, psychological, biological, and contextual, or is it ultimately incomprehensible unless some form of transpersonal contact with the world is allowed? Although the question must remain unanswered at present, there is hope that progress can be made. We may have to wait for significant advances in neuroscience and fundamental physics, but these areas of study have been developing apace in recent years, and it is perhaps not unduly optimistic to think that progress will continue. When the workings of the brain are better understood and the puzzles of physics yield up more of their secrets, we may be close to understanding extrovertive experience. In the meantime, we can at best strive to hold informed opinions, and I for one strongly suspect that the deeper experiences really do bring transpersonal contact with the natural world.

References

Aberbach, David (1989). *Surviving Trauma: Loss, Literature and Psychoanalysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

—— (1993). 'Mystical union and grief: The Ba'al Shem Tov and Krishnamurti'. *Harvard Theological Review*, 86/3: 309–21.

Abrams, M. H. (1973). *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Alexander, C. N., J. L. Davies, C. A. Dixon, M. C. Dillbeck, S. M. Drucker, R. M. Oetzel, J. M. Muehlman, and D. W. Orme-Johnson (1990). 'Growth of higher stages of consciousness: Maharishi's Vedic psychology of human development', in Charles N. Alexander and Ellen J. Langer (eds.), *Higher Stages of Human Development: Perspectives on Adult Growth*. New York: Oxford University Press, 286–341.

Allen, Warner (1946). *The Timeless Moment*. London: Faber & Faber.

Almond, Philip C. (1982). *Mystical Experience and Religious Doctrine: An Investigation of the Study of Mysticism in World Religions*. Berlin: Mouton.

—— (1983). 'Rudolf Otto and the Kantian tradition'. *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie*, 25/1: 52–67.

—— (1984). *Rudolf Otto: An Introduction to His Philosophical Theology*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

—— (1990). 'Mysticism and its contexts', in Robert K. C. Forman (ed.), *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 211–19.

Ancilla [Grace Ashley Wood] (1955). *The Following Feet*. London: Longmans, Green.

Andresen, Jensine (2000*a*). 'Meditation meets behavioural medicine: The story of experimental research on meditation'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 7/11–12: 17–73.

—— (2000*b*). 'Religion in the flesh: Forging new methodologies for the study of religion', in ead. (ed.), *Religion in Mind: Cognitive Perspectives on Religious Belief, Ritual, and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 257–87.

Argyle, Michael (2000). *Psychology and Religion: An Introduction*. London: Routledge.

Armour, Leslie, and Elizabeth Trott (1981). *The Faces of Reason: An Essay on Philosophy and Culture in English Canada, 1850–1950*. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Armstrong, A. H. (1984). 'Dualism Platonic, Gnostic, and Christian', in David T. Runia (ed.), *Plotinus amid Gnostics and Christians*. Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij/Free University Press, 29–52.

Assagioli, Roberto (1934). 'Psychoanalysis and psychosynthesis'. *Hibbert Journal*, 32/2: 184–201.

—— ((1959) 1975). 'Dynamic psychology and psychosynthesis', in id., *Psychosynthesis: A Collection of Basic Writings*. Wellingborough: Turnstone Press, 11–34.

—— ((1961) 1975). 'Self-realization and psychological disturbances', in id., *Psychosynthesis: A Collection of Basic Writings*. Wellingborough: Turnstone Press, 35–59.

Auden, W. H. (1964). 'Introduction', in Anne Fremantle (ed.), *The Protestant Mystics*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 3–37.

Austin, James H. (1998). *Zen and the Brain: Toward an Understanding of Meditation and Consciousness*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

—— (2000). 'Consciousness evolves when self dissolves'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 7/11–12: 209–30.

Austin, Mary (1931). *Experiences Facing Death*. London: Rider.

Bailly, Constantina Rhodes (1987). *Shaiva Devotional Songs of Kashmir: A Translation and Study of Utpaladeva's* Shivastotravali. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Baker, Denise Nowakowski (1994). *Julian of Norwich's* Showings: *From Vision to Book*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Bakshi, Parminder Kaur (1990). 'Homosexuality and orientalism: Edward Carpenter's journey to the East', in Tony Brown (ed.), *Edward Carpenter and Late Victorian Radicalism*. London: Frank Cass, 151–77.

Bancroft, Anne (1977). 'A crowning clarity', in British Broadcasting Corporation, *The Light of Experience*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 65–9.

Barnard, G. William (1994). 'Transformations and transformers: Spirituality and the academic study of mysticism'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 1/2: 256–60.

—— (1997). *Exploring Unseen Worlds: William James and the Philosophy of Mysticism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

—— (2002). '*The Varieties of Religious Experience*: Reflections on its enduring value'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 9/9–10: 57–77.

Barnes, L. Philip (1992). 'Walter Stace's philosophy of mysticism'. *Hermathena*, 153/1: 5–20.

Bastow, David (1976). 'Otto and numinous experience'. *Religious Studies*, 12/2: 159–76.

Beardsworth, Timothy (1977). *A Sense of Presence: The Phenomenology of Certain Kinds of Visionary and Ecstatic Experience, Based on a Thousand Contemporary First-hand Accounts*. Manchester College, Oxford: Religious Experience Research Unit.

Becker, Carl B. (1993). *Paranormal Experience and Survival of Death*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Beer, Frances (trans.) (1998). *Julian of Norwich:* Revelations of Divine Love *and* The Motherhood of God. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.

Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin (1996). *Psychoanalytic Studies of Religion: A Critical Assessment and Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

Beit-Hallahmi, Benjamin, and Michael Argyle (1997). *The Psychology of Religious Behaviour, Belief and Experience*. London: Routledge.

Bell, David N. (1977). 'The vision of the world and of the archetypes in the Latin spirituality of the Middle Ages'. *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 44: 7–31.

Bell, Ian F. A. (1981). 'Tradition and race-memory: What it was to be Modern'. *Southern Review*, 14/1: 3–35; repr. in id. (1981), *The Critic as Scientist: The Modernist Poetics of Ezra Pound*, London: Methuen, 171–206.

Benedict, Mellen-Thomas (1996). 'Through the light and beyond', in Lee W. Bailey and Jenny Yates (eds.), *The Near-Death Experience: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 39–70.

Benz, Ernst (1983). *The Mystical Sources of German Romantic Philosophy*. Allison Park, Pa.: Pickwick.

Bergson, Henri (1911). *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer. London: George Allen.

—— (1920). ' "Phantasms of the Living" and "Psychical Research" ' (presidential address to the Society for Psychical Research, 28 May 1913), in id., *Mind-Energy: Lectures and Essays*, trans. H. Wildon Carr. London: Macmillan, 60–83.

—— (1935). *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton, with the assistance of W. Horsfall Carter. London: Macmillan.

Berman, David (1994). *George Berkeley: Idealism and the Man*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

—— (1997). *Berkeley: Experimental Philosophy*. London: Phoenix.

Bharati, Agehananda (1976). *The Light at the Centre: Context and Pretext of Modern Mysticism*. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Ross-Erikson.

Blackmore, Susan (1993). *Dying to Live: Science and the Near-Death Experience*. London: Grafton, HarperCollins.

Braden, William (1967). *The Private Sea: LSD and the Search for God*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.

Bragdon, Emma (1993). *A Sourcebook for Helping People with Spiritual Problems*. Aptos, Calif.: Lightening Up Press.

Brämswig, A. (1976). 'Idealrealismus', in Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer (eds.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. iv. Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe, 44–6.

Brink, Andrew (1977). *Loss and Symbolic Repair: A Psychological Study of Some English Poets*. Hamilton, Ont.: Cromlech Press.

—— (1982). *Creativity as Repair: Bipolarity and Its Closure*. Hamilton, Ont.: Cromlech Press.

Broad, C. D. (1949). 'The relevance of psychical research to philosophy'. *Philosophy*, 24/91: 291–309.

Brown, Tony (1989*a*). 'Figuring in history: The reputation of Edward Carpenter, 1883–1987. Annotated secondary bibliography, I'. *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920*, 32/1: 34–64.

—— (1989*b*). 'Edward Carpenter: Annotated secondary bibliography, II'. *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920*, 32/2: 170–210.

—— (ed.) 1990. *Edward Carpenter and Late Victorian Radicalism*. London: Frank Cass.

Bucke, Richard Maurice (1879). *Man's Moral Nature: An Essay*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

—— ((1901) 1989). *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*. Secaucus, N.J.: Citadel Press.

Buckton, Oliver S. (1998). *Secret Selves: Confession and Same-Sex Desire in Victorian Autobiography*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Bussanich, John (1994). 'Mystical elements in the thought of Plotinus', in Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini (eds.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* (*ANRW*), ii. 36. 7. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 5300–30.

—— (1997). 'Plotinian mysticism in theoretical and comparative perspective'. *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 71/3: 339–65.

Butler, Dom Cuthbert (1922). *Western Mysticism: The Teaching of SS Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life*. London: Constable.

Campbell, Anthony (1974). *Seven States of Consciousness*. London: Victor Gollanz.

Capra, Fritjof (1975). *The Tao of Physics: An Exploration of the Parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism*. London: Wildwood House.

Carington, Whately (1949). *Matter, Mind and Meaning*. London: Methuen.

Carmody, Denise Lardner, and John Tully Carmody (1996). *Mysticism: Holiness East and West*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Carpenter, Edward (1883). *Towards Democracy*. Manchester: John Heywood.

—— (1889). *Civilisation: Its Cause and Cure, and Other Essays*. London: Swan Sonnenschein.

Carpenter, Edward (1892). *From Adam's Peak to Elephanta: Sketches in Ceylon and India*. London: Swan Sonnenschein.

—— (1894). 'Towards democracy'. *The Labour Prophet*, 3/29: 49–51.

—— (1896). *Love's Coming-of-Age: A Series of Papers on the Relations of the Sexes*. Manchester: Labour Press.

—— (1898). *Angel's Wings: A Series of Essays on Art and Its Relation to Life*. London: Swan Sonnenschein.

—— (1904*a*). *The Art of Creation: Essays on the Self and Its Powers*. London: George Allen.

—— (1904*b*). 'The gods as embodiments of the race-memory'. *Hibbert Journal*, 2/2: 259–79.

—— (1906*a*). *Days with Walt Whitman: With Some Notes on His Life and Work*. London: George Allen.

—— (1906*b*). 'The "X" behind phenomena'. *The Occult Review*, October: 178–83.

—— (1907). *The Art of Creation: Essays on the Self and Its Powers*, 2nd edn. London: George Allen.

—— (1912). *The Drama of Love and Death: A Study of Human Evolution and Transfiguration*. London: George Allen.

—— (1914). *Intermediate Types among Primitive Folk: A Study in Social Evolution*. London: George Allen.

—— (1916). *My Days and Dreams: Being Autobiographical Notes*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

—— (1920). *Pagan and Christian Creeds: Their Origin and Meaning*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

—— (1926). *Towards Democracy*, complete edn. London: George Allen & Unwin (first pub. 1905).

—— (ed.) (1927). *Light from the East: Being Letters on Gñanam, the Divine Knowledge, by the Hon. P. Arunáchalam*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Carpenter, Edward, and George Barnefield [G. C. Barnard] (1925). *The Psychology of the Poet Shelley*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Carpenter, W. B. (1874). *Principles of Mental Physiology*. London: Henry S. King.

C. G. Jung Bibliothek (1967). *Katalog*. Küsnacht, Zurich: C. G. Jung Bibliothek.

Chadwick, Peter K. (1997). *Schizophrenia: The Positive Perspective*. London: Routledge.

—— (2001). 'Sanity to supersanity to insanity: A personal journey', in Isabel Clarke (ed.), *Psychosis and Spirituality: Exploring the New Frontier*. London: Whurr, 75–89.

Chimes, Julie (1996). *A Stranger in Paradise: The True Story of a Near-Death Experience and Its Aftermath*. London: Bloomsbury.

Clarke, Isabel (ed.) (2001). *Psychosis and Spirituality: Exploring the New Frontier*. London: Whurr.

Clarke, J. J. (1992). *In Search of Jung: Historical and Philosophical Enquiries*. London: Routledge.

—— (2000). *The Tao of the West: Western Transformations of Taoist Thought*. London: Routledge.

Cohen, J. M., and J.-F. Phipps (1979). *The Common Experience*. London: Rider.

Connolly, Peter (2000). 'Mystical experience and trance experience'. *Transpersonal Psychology Review*, 4/1: 23–35.

Conze, Edward (trans.) (1959). *Buddhist Scriptures*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Cook, Ramsay (1985). 'Richard Maurice Bucke: Religious heresiarch and utopian', in id., *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 86–104.

Corcoran, Diane K. (1996). *When Ego Dies: A Compilation of Near-Death and Mystical Conversion Experiences*. Houston: Emerald Ink.

Cortright, Brant (1997). *Psychotherapy and Spirit: Theory and Practice in Transpersonal Psychotherapy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Coudert, Allison P. (1995). *Leibniz and the Kabbalah*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Courcelle, Pierre (1967). 'La vision cosmique de saint Benoît'. *Revue des études augustiniennes*, 13/1–2: 97–117.

Courtois, Flora (1986). *An Experience of Enlightenment*. Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House.

Coxhead, Nona (1985). *The Relevance of Bliss: A Contemporary Exploration of Mystic Experience*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Crook, Paul (1991). 'W. R. Inge and cultural crisis, 1899–1920'. *Journal of Religious History*, 16/4: 410–32.

Crouter, Richard (1988). 'Introduction', in Friedrich Schleiermacher ((1799) 1988), *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1–73.

Crowley, Vivianne (1990). 'The Initiation', in Prudence Jones and Caitlín Matthews (eds.), *Voices from the Circle: The Heritage of Western Paganism*. Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 65–82.

Cunningham, Andrew (2000). 'Science and religion in the thirteenth century revisited: The making of St Francis the proto-ecologist, Part 1: Creature not Nature'. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 31/4: 613–43.

Dann, Kevin T. (1998). *Bright Colors Falsely Seen: Synaesthesia and the Search for Transcendental Knowledge*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

d'Aquili, Eugene, and Andrew B. Newberg (1999). *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Davis, Richard P. (1982). *Bishop John Edward Mercer: A Christian Socialist in Tasmania*. University of Tasmania Occasional Paper, 34. Hobart: University of Tasmania.

—— (1983). 'Bishop Mercer in England and Tasmania'. *Tasmanian Historical Research Association Papers and Proceedings*, 30/2: 42–53.

—— (1986). 'Mercer, John Edward', in Bede Nairn and Geoffrey Serle (eds.), *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. x (1891–1939). Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 484–5.

Davy, John (1836). *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Humphry Davy, Bart*. 2 vols. London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, & Longman.

DeAngelis, William James (1997). 'Metaphysics I (1900–45)', in John V. Canfield (ed.), *Philosophy of Meaning, Knowledge and Value in the Twentieth Century*, Routledge History of Philosophy, 10. London: Routledge, 76–107.

Deikman, Arthur J. (1963). 'Experimental meditation'. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, 136/4: 329–43.

—— (1966*a*). 'De-automatization and the mystic experience'. *Psychiatry*, 29/4: 324–38.

—— (1966*b*). 'Implications of experimentally induced contemplative meditation'. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, 142/2: 101–16.

—— (1976). 'Bimodal consciousness and the mystic experience', in Philip R. Lee, Robert E. Ornstein, David Galin, Arthur Deikman, and Charles T. Tart, *Symposium on Consciousness*. New York: Viking Press, 67–88.

—— (1982). *The Observing Self: Mysticism and Psychotherapy*. Boston: Beacon Press.

—— (2000). 'A functional approach to mysticism'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 7/11–12: 75–91.

Delacroix, Henri (1908). *Études d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme: Les grandes mystiques chrétiens*. Paris: Alcan.

Delavenay, Emile (1971). *D. H. Lawrence and Edward Carpenter: A Study in Edwardian Transition*. London: Heinemann.

Dewick, E. C. (1938). *The Indwelling God: A Historical Study of the Christian Conception of Divine Immanence and Incarnation, with Special Reference to Indian Thought*. London: Oxford University Press.

Dodds, E. R. (1965). *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Douglas, Claire (1997). 'The historical context of analytical psychology', in Polly Young-Eisendrath and Terence Dawson (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Jung*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 17–34.

Dronke, Peter (1984). *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua* (†*203*) *to Marguerite Porete* (†*1310*). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dyczkowski, Mark S. G. (1987). *The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Eagleton, Terence Francis (1968). 'Nature and Spirit: A Study of Edward Carpenter in his Intellectual Context'. Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge.

Edwards, Paul (1967). 'Panpsychism', in id. (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. vi. New York: Macmillan, 22–31.

Eigen, Michael (1998). *The Psychoanalytic Mystic*. London: Free Association Books.

Eisler, Rudolf (1927). 'Ideal-Realismus', in id., *Wörterbuch der philosophischen Begriffe*, 4th edn., vol. i. Berlin: E. S. Mittler & Sohn, 681–2.

Eliade, Mircea (1965). *The Two and The One*, trans. J. M. Cohen. London: Harvill.

Ellenberger, Henri F. (1970). *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry*. London: Allen Lane.

Ellis, Mrs Havelock [Edith M. O. Ellis] (1910). *Three Modern Seers*. London: Stanley Paul.

Ellison, Arthur J. (2002). *Science and the Paranormal: Altered States of Reality*. Edinburgh: Floris Books.

Ellwood, Robert S. (1999). *Mysticism and Religion*, 2nd edn. Chappaqua, N.Y.: Seven Bridges Press.

Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1983). *Ralph Waldo Emerson: Essays and Lectures*, ed. Joel Porte. New York: Library of America.

Emerton, Ephraim (trans.) (1940). *The Letters of Saint Boniface*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Estany, Anna (2001). 'The thesis of theory-laden observation in the light of cognitive psychology'. *Philosophy of Science*, 68/2: 203–17.

Farquhar, Ron (2002). 'Enlightenment from a prison cell'. *De Numine*, 33: 7–8.

Fechner, Gustav ((1860) 1966). *Elements of Psychophysics*, vol. i, ed. Davis H. Howes and Edwin G. Boring, trans. Helmut E. Adler. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Ferrando, Guido (1931). 'Edward Carpenter as I knew him', in Gilbert Beith (ed.), *Edward Carpenter: In Appreciation*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 63–73.

Ferrer, Jorge N. (2000). 'Transpersonal knowledge: A participatory approach to transpersonal phenomena', in Tobin Hart, Peter L. Nelson, and Kaisa Puhakka (eds.), *Transpersonal Knowing: Exploring the Horizon of Consciousness*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 213–52.

Ferrucci, Piero (1982). *What We May Be: The Visions and Techniques of Psychosynthesis*. Wellingborough: Turnstone Press.

Fischer, Roland (1971). 'A cartography of ecstatic and meditative states'. *Science*, 174/4012: 897–904.

Fisher, David James (1982). 'Reading Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents*', in Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan (eds.), *Modern Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 251–79.

Fontinell, Eugene (1986). *Self, God, and Immortality: A Jamesian Investigation*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Forgie, J. William (1985). 'Hyper-Kantianism in recent discussions of mystical experience'. *Religious Studies*, 21/2: 205–18.

Forman, Robert K. C. (1986). 'Pure consciousness events and mysticism'. *Sophia*, 25/1: 49–58.

—— (1990*a*). 'Introduction: Mysticism, constructivism, and forgetting', in id. (ed.), *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 3–49.

—— (1991). 'Reply: Bagger and the ghosts of GAA'. *Religious Studies*, 27/3: 413–20.

—— (1993). 'Mystical knowledge: Knowledge by identity'. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 61/4: 705–38.

—— (1998*a*). 'What does mysticism have to teach us about consciousness?' *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 5/2: 185–201.

—— (1999). *Mysticism, Mind, Consciousness*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

—— (ed.) (1990*b*). *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

—— (ed.) (1998*b*). *The Innate Capacity: Mysticism, Psychology, and Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Forryan, Barbara, and Janet M. Glover (comp.) (1979). *General Index to the Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. xx of *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, ed. Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, and William McGuire. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Fort, Andrew O. (1990). *The Self and Its States: A States of Consciousness Doctrine in Advaita Vedānta*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

—— (1998). Jīvanmukti *in Transformation: Embodied Liberation in Advaita and Neo-Vedanta*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Fort, Andrew O., and Patricia Y. Mumme (1996). *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Foster, Genevieve W. (1985). *The World Was Flooded with Light: A Mystical Experience Remembered*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Foster, John (1982). *The Case for Idealism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

—— (1985). 'Berkeley on the physical world', in id. and Howard Robinson (eds.), *Essays on Berkeley: A Tercentennial Celebration*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 83–108.

Fox, Adam (1960). *Dean Inge*. London: John Murray.

Fox, Mark (2003). *Religion, Spirituality and the Near-Death Experience*. London: Routledge.

Franklin, John (2000). 'A spiritual biography: An account of spiritual/religious experiences from a small child to the present moment'. *De Numine*, 28: 14–17.

Franks Davis, Caroline (1989). *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Fremantle, Anne (ed.) (1964). *The Protestant Mystics*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Freud, Sigmund ((1930) 1961). 'Civilization and its discontents', in James Strachey (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. xxi. London: Hogarth Press, 57–146.

—— ((1941) 1964). 'Findings, ideas, problems', in James Strachey (ed.), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. xxiii. London: Hogarth Press, 299–300.

Furse, Margaret Lewis (1977). *Mysticism: Window on a World View*. Nashville: Abingdon.

—— (1978). 'Mysticism: Classic modern interpretations and their premise of continuity'. *Anglican Theological Review*, 60/2: 180–93.

Gall, Edward (1934). *Mysticism Throughout the Ages*. London: Rider.

Garside, Bruce (1972). 'Language and the interpretation of mystical experience'. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 3 (summer): 93–102.

Geoghegan, Vincent (1991). 'A Golden Age: From the reign of Kronos to the realm of freedom'. *History of Political Thought*, 12/2: 187–207.

—— (2003). 'Edward Carpenter's England revisited'. *History of Political Thought*, 24/3: 509–27.

Gershenowitz, Harry (1984). 'Two Lamarckians: Walt Whitman and Edward Carpenter'. *Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, 2/1: 35–9.

Gimello, Robert M. (1983). 'Mysticism in its contexts', in Steven T. Katz (ed.), *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 61–88.

Glasier, Katharine Bruce (1931). 'Edward Carpenter's influence', in Gilbert Beith (ed.), *Edward Carpenter: In Appreciation*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 82–9.

Gombrich, E. H. (1960). *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts, 1956). London: Phaidon Press.

Goodman, Lenn Evan (1972). *Ibn Tufayl's* Hayy Ibn Yaqzān: *A Philosophical Tale*. New York: Twayne.

Greeley, Andrew M. (1974). *Ecstasy: A Way of Knowing*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

—— (1975). *The Sociology of the Paranormal: A Reconnaissance*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage.

Greenberg, David, Eliezer Witztum, and Jacob T. Buchbinder (1992). 'Mysticism and psychosis: The fate of Ben Zoma'. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 65/3: 223–35.

Greene, Dana (1990). *Evelyn Underhill: Artist of the Infinite Life*. New York: Crossroad.

—— (ed.) (1988). *Evelyn Underhill: Modern Guide to the Ancient Quest for the Holy*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Greyson, Bruce, and Nancy Evans Bush (1992). 'Distressing near-death experiences'. *Psychiatry*, 55/1: 95–110; repr. in Lee W. Bailey and Jenny Yates (eds.) (1996), *The Near-Death Experience: A Reader*, New York: Routledge, 209–30.

Griffin, David Ray (1997). *Parapsychology, Philosophy, and Spirituality: A Postmodern Exploration*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

—— (1998). *Unsnarling the World-Knot: Consciousness, Freedom, and the Mind–Body Problem*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Griffiths, Paul J. (1990). 'Pure consciousness and Indian Buddhism', in Robert K. C. Forman (ed.), *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 71–97.

—— (1994). *On Being Buddha: The Classical Doctrine of Buddhahood*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Grof, Christina, and Stanislav Grof (1991). *The Stormy Search for the Self: Understanding and Living with Spiritual Emergency*. London: Mandala, HarperCollins.

Grof, Stanislav (1988). *The Adventure of Self-Discovery: Dimensions of Consciousness and New Perspectives in Psychotherapy and Inner Exploration*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Grof, Stanislav, and Christina Grof (eds.) (1989). *Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis*. Los Angeles: Tarcher.

Grosart, Alexander B. (ed.) (1876). *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*. 3 vols. London: Edward Moxon, Son, & Co.

Hadot, Pierre (1995). *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, ed. Arnold I. Davidson, trans. Michael Chase. Oxford: Blackwell.

Hall, W. Winslow (1926). *Observed Illuminates*. London: C. W. Daniel.

—— (1937). *Recorded Illuminates*. London: C. W. Daniel.

Hannaford, Colin (1997). 'Ordinary solutions: The inspiration of democracy'. <http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/polcaus/Han.html>.

Hansen, Chad (1983). 'A *Tao* of *Tao* in the *Chuang-tzu*', in V. Mair (ed.), *Experimental Essays on Chuang-tzu*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 24–55.

Hanson, Norwood Russell (1958). *Patterns of Discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1969). *Perception and Discovery: An Introduction to Scientific Inquiry*, ed. Willard C. Humphreys. San Francisco: Freeman, Cooper & Company.

Happold, F. C. (1957). *Adventure in Search of a Creed*. London: Faber & Faber.

—— (1970). *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology*, revised edn. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Hardy, Alister (1979). *The Spiritual Nature of Man: A Study of Contemporary Religious Experience*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hardy, Jean (1987). *A Psychology with a Soul: Psychosynthesis in Evolutionary Context*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Harrison, Jonathan (1993). 'Science, souls and sense-data', in Edmond Wright (ed.), *New Representationalisms: Essays in the Philosophy of Perception*. Aldershot: Avebury, Ashgate, 15–44.

Harvey, Peter (1990). *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1995). *The Selfless Mind: Personality, Consciousness and Nirvana in Early Buddhism*. Richmond: Curzon.

Hay, David (1979). 'Religious experience amongst a group of post-graduate students: A qualitative study'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 18/2: 164–82.

—— (1985). 'Religious experience and its induction', in L. B. Brown (ed.), *Advances in the Psychology of Religion*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 135–50.

Hay, David, and Gordon Heald (1987). 'Religion is good for you'. *New Society*, 80 (17 April): 20–2.

Hay, David, and Ann Morisy (1978). 'Reports of ecstatic, paranormal, or religious experience in Great Britain and the United States: A comparison of trends'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 17/3: 255–68.

Hayes, Charles (ed.) (2000). *Tripping: An Anthology of True-Life Psychedelic Adventures*. New York: Penguin Compass.

Heald, Gordon (2000). 'BBC "Soul of Britain" questionnaire'. Fieldwork conducted 25 April–7 May 2000 by the Opinion Research Business (ORB), London.

Hearn, Lafcadio (1895). *Out of the East: Reveries and Studies in New Japan*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

—— (1896). *Kokoro: Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

—— (1898). *Exotics and Retrospectives*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Heehs, Peter (1989). *Sri Aurobindo: A Brief Biography*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Helm, Robert M. (1962). *The Gloomy Dean: The Thought of William Ralph Inge*. Winston-Salem, N.C.: John F. Blair.

Henderson, Linda Dalrymple (1983). *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

—— (1987). 'Mysticism as the "Tie That Binds": The case of Edward Carpenter and Modernism'. *Art Journal*, 46/1: 29–37.

Heywood, Rosalind (1978). *The Infinite Hive: A Personal Record of Extra-Sensory Experiences*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Hick, John (1989). *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*. London: Macmillan.

Hoffman, Edward (1992). *Visions of Innocence: Spiritual and Inspirational Experiences of Childhood*. Boston: Shambhala.

Hölderlin, Friedrich (1990). Hyperion *and Selected Poems*, ed. Eric L. Santner. German Library, 22. New York: Continuum.

Hollenback, Jess Byron (1996). *Mysticism: Experience, Response, and Empowerment*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Holmes, Edmond (1921). *All Is One: A Plea for the Higher Pantheism*. London: Richard Cobden-Sanderson.

Hood, Ralph W. (1975). 'The construction and preliminary validation of a measure of reported mystical experience'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 14/1: 29–41.

—— (1994). 'Self and self-loss in mystical experience', in Thomas M. Brinthaupt and Richard P. Lipka (eds.), *Changing the Self: Philosophies, Techniques, and Experiences*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 279–305.

—— (1997). 'The empirical study of mysticism', in Bernard Spilka and Daniel N. McIntosh (eds.), *The Psychology of Religion: Theoretical Approaches*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 222–34.

Hood, Ralph W., Ronald J. Morris, and P. J. Watson (1993). 'Further factor analysis of Hood's Mysticism Scale'. *Psychological Reports*, 73/3.2: 1176–8.

Hood, Ralph W., Bernard Spilka, Bruce Hunsberger, and Richard Gorsuch (eds.) (1996). *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Approach*. New York: Guilford Press.

Hooker, C. A. (1973). 'Empiricism, perception and conceptual change'. *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 3/1: 59–75.

Horgan, John (1998). *The End of Science: Facing the Limits of Knowledge in the Twilight of the Scientific Age*. London: Abacus, Little, Brown.

—— (2003). *Rational Mysticism: Dispatches from the Border between Science and Spirituality*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Horne, James R. (1964). 'Cosmic Consciousness—Then and Now: The Evolutionary Mysticism of Richard Maurice Bucke'. Ph.D. thesis, Columbia University.

—— (1982). 'Pure mysticism and twofold typologies: The typology of mysticism—James to Katz'. *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies*, 3/1: 3–14.

—— (1983). *The Moral Mystic*. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Houston, Jean, and Robert E. L. Masters (1972). 'The experimental induction of religious-type experiences', in John White (ed.), *The Highest State of Consciousness*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 303–21.

Hughes, Robert D. (1976). 'Zen, Zurvan, and Zaehner: A memorial tribute to the late Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics, Oxford'. *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses*, 6/2: 139–48.

Huxley, Aldous (1945). *The Perennial Philosophy*. New York: Harper.

—— ((1954) 1994). *The Doors of Perception*, in id., *The Doors of Perception & Heaven and Hell*. London: Flamingo, HarperCollins, 1–56.

—— ((1956) 1994). *Heaven and Hell*, in id., *The Doors of Perception & Heaven and Hell*. London: Flamingo, HarperCollins, 57–135.

—— (1972). 'Visionary experience' (from a speech delivered at the XIV International Congress of Applied Psychology, Copenhagen, Denmark, 1961), in John White (ed.), *The Highest State of Consciousness*. Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 34–57.

Ikin, A. Graham (1973). 'Beyond drugs—a cosmic vision'. *Light*, 94 (winter): 173–81.

Inge, William Ralph (1899). *Christian Mysticism*. London: Methuen.

—— (1918). *The Philosophy of Plotinus*. 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green.

—— (1933). *God and the Astronomers*. London: Longmans, Green.

—— (1947). *Mysticism in Religion*. London: Hutchinson's University Library.

Isherwood, Margaret (1954). *The Root of the Matter: A Study in the Connections between Religion, Psychology and Education*. London: Victor Gollancz.

Israel, Martin (1982). *Precarious Living: The Path to Life*. London: Mowbray.

Jackson, Frank (1977). *Perception: A Representative Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jacyna, L. S. (1981). 'The physiology of mind, the unity of nature, and the moral order in Victorian thought'. *British Journal for the History of Science*, 14/2.47: 109–32.

Jaini, Padmanabh S. (1979). *The Jaina Path of Purification*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Jakobsen, Merete Demant (1999). *Negative Spiritual Experiences: Encounters with Evil*. Oxford: Religious Experience Research Centre.

James, William ((1890) 1950). *The Principles of Psychology*. 2 vols. New York: Dover.

—— ((1898) 1982). 'Human immortality: Two supposed objections to the doctrine', in id., *Essays in Religion and Morality*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 75–101.

James, William ((1902) 1985). *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

—— (1904). 'Does "consciousness" exist?' *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 1/18: 477–91.

—— (1909). *A Pluralistic Universe*. London: Longmans, Green.

—— ((1910) 1978). 'A suggestion about mysticism', in id., *Essays in Philosophy*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 157–65.

Jantzen, Grace M. (1995). *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jaspers, Karl (1963). *General Psychopathology*, 7th edn., trans. J. Hoenig and Marian W. Hamilton. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Jay, Mike (ed.) (1999). *Artificial Paradises: A Drugs Reader*. London: Penguin.

Jephcott, E. F. N. (1972). *Proust and Rilke: The Literature of Expanded Consciousness*. London: Chatto & Windus.

Joël, Karl (1903). *Der Ursprung der Naturphilosophie aus dem Geiste der Mystik*. Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt.

Johnson, Raynor C. (1959). *Watcher on the Hills*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

—— (1984). *Light of All Life: Thoughts towards a Philosophy of Life*. Tasburgh, Norwich: Pilgrims Book Services.

Johnson, Todd E. (1998). 'Evelyn Underhill's pneumatology: Origins and implications'. *Downside Review*, 116/403: 109–36.

Jones, Richard H. (1986). *Science and Mysticism: A Comparative Study of Western Natural Science, Theravāda Buddhism, and Advaita Vedānta*. Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press.

—— (1993). *Mysticism Examined: Philosophical Inquiries into Mysticism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

—— (2000). *Reductionism: Analysis and the Fullness of Reality*. Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press.

Jones, Rufus M. ((1909) 1936). *Studies in Mystical Religion*. London: Macmillan.

Jung, C. G. (1919). *Psychology of the Unconscious*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

—— (1933). 'Archaic Man', in id., *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, trans. W. S. Dell and Cary F. Bayne. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 143–74.

Katz, Steven T. (1978*a*). 'Language, epistemology, and mysticism', in id. (ed.), *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 22–74.

—— (1983*a*). 'The "conservative" character of mystical experience', in id. (ed.), *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*. New York: Oxford University Press, 3–60.

—— (1992). 'Mystical speech and mystical meaning', in id. (ed.), *Mysticism and Language*. New York: Oxford University Press, 3–41.

—— (ed.) (1978*b*). *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press.

—— (ed.) (1983*b*). *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kellehear, Allan (1996). *Experiences Near Death: Beyond Medicine and Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kelly, Emily Williams (2001). 'The contributions of F. W. H. Myers to psychology'. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 65.2/863: 65–90.

Kidner, David W. (2000). 'Fabricating nature: A critique of the social construction of nature'. *Environmental Ethics*, 22/4: 339–57.

King, Richard (1999). *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'*. London: Routledge.

King, Sallie B. (1988). 'Two epistemological models for the interpretation of mysticism'. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 56/2: 257–79.

Kirschner, Suzanne R. (1996). *The Religious and Romantic Origins of Psychoanalysis: Individuation and Integration in Post-Freudian Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Knight, David (2000). 'Higher pantheism'. *Zygon*, 35/3: 603–12.

Knysh, Alexander (2000). *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History*. Leiden: Brill.

Koestler, Arthur (1954). *The Invisible Writing*. London: Collins with Hamish Hamilton.

Kourie, Celia (1992). 'Mysticism: A survey of recent issues'. *Journal for the Study of Religion*, 5/2: 83–103.

Kräupl Taylor, F. (1979). *Psychopathology: Its Causes and Symptoms*. Sunbury-on-Thames: Quartermaine House.

Kripal, Jeffrey J. (2001). *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Krishna, Gopi (1971). *Kundalini: The Evolutionary Energy in Man*. Boulder, Colo.: Shambhala.

Kuhn, Thomas S. (1962). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lachance, Paul (trans.) (1993). *Angela of Foligno: Complete Works*. New York: Paulist Press.

Lancaster, Brian L. (1997). 'The mythology of anatta: Bridging the East–West divide', in John Pickering (ed.), *The Authority of Experience: Essays on Buddhism and Psychology*. Richmond: Curzon, 173–202.

—— (2000). 'On the relationship between cognitive models and spiritual maps: Evidence from Hebrew language mysticism'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 7/11–12: 231–50.

Lancaster, Brian L. (2004). *Approaches to Consciousness: The Marriage of Science and Mysticism*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Lane, N. R., and S. A. Lane (1981). 'Paradigms and perception'. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 12/1: 47–60.

Lash, Nicholas (1988). *Easter in Ordinary: Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God*. London: SCM Press.

Laski, Marghanita (1961). *Ecstasy: A Study of Some Secular and Religious Experiences*. London: Cresset Press.

Laubscher, B. J. F. (1972). *Where Mystery Dwells: A Psychiatrist Studies Psychical Phenomena*. Cambridge: James Clarke.

Lea, F. A. (1959). *The Life of John Middleton Murry*. London: Methuen.

Lello, Ronald S. (ed.) (1985). *Revelations: Glimpses of Reality*. London: Shepheard-Walwyn and Border Television.

Lewis, Edward (1915). *Edward Carpenter: An Exposition and an Appreciation*. London: Methuen.

Lewis, I. M. (1971). *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Lindsay, T. M. (1876). 'Hermann Lotze'. *Mind*, 1/3: 363–82.

Linsky, Bernard (1997). 'Metaphysics I (1945 to the present)', in John V. Canfield (ed.), *Philosophy of Meaning, Knowledge and Value in the Twentieth Century*, Routledge History of Philosophy, 10. London: Routledge, 108–33.

Lloyd, Peter B. (1999). *Paranormal Phenomena and Berkeley's Metaphysics*. London: Ursa Software.

Lockwood, Michael (1989). *Mind, Brain, and the Quantum: The Compound 'I'*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Loy, David (1988). *Nonduality: A Study in Comparative Philosophy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lozynsky, Artem (ed.) (1977). *Richard Maurice Bucke, Medical Mystic: Letters to Walt Whitman and His Friends*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Lukoff, David (1985). 'The diagnosis of mystical experiences with psychotic features'. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 17/2: 155–81.

—— (1996). 'Transpersonal psychotherapy with psychotic disorders and spiritual emergencies with psychotic features', in Bruce W. Scotton, Allan B. Chinen, and John R. Battista (eds.), *Textbook of Transpersonal Psychiatry and Psychology*. New York: Basic Books, 271–81.

Lutyens, Mary (1975). *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*. London: John Murray.

McDermott, Robert A. (1986). 'Introduction', in William James, *Essays in Psychical Research*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, xiii–xxxvi.

McGinn, Bernard (1992). *The Foundations of Mysticism*. London: SCM Press.

—— (1995). *The Growth of Mysticism: From Gregory the Great to the Twelfth Century*. London: SCM Press.

Mach, Ernst (1897). *Contributions to the Analysis of the Sensations*, trans. C. M. Williams. Chicago: Open Court.

Macnaghten, Phil, and John Urry (1998). *Contested Natures*. London: Sage.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1969). *On the Bhagavad-Gita: A New Translation and Commentary, Chapters 1–6*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Main, Roderick (ed.) (1997). *Jung on Synchronicity and the Paranormal*. London: Routledge.

Marks, Lawrence E. (1978). *The Unity of the Senses: Interrelations among the Modalities*. New York: Academic Press.

Marshall, Paul (1992). *The Living Mirror: Images of Reality in Science and Mysticism*. London: Samphire Press.

—— (2001). 'Transforming the world into experience: An idealist experiment'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8/1: 59–76.

Masters, R. E. L., and Jean Houston (1973). *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience*, 2nd British edn. London: Turnstone Books.

Matchett, Freda (2001). *Kṛṣṇa: Lord or* Avatāra? *The Relationship between Kṛṣṇa and Viṣṇu in the Context of the* Avatāra *Myth as Presented by the* Harivaṃśa, *the* Viṣṇupurāṇa *and the* Bhāgavatapurāṇa. Richmond: Curzon.

Mavromatis, Andreas (1987). *Hypnagogia: The Unique State of Consciousness between Wakefulness and Sleep*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Maxwell, Meg, and Verena Tschudin (eds.) (1996). *Seeing the Invisible: Modern Religious and Other Transcendent Experiences*. Oxford: Religious Experience Research Centre (first pub. 1990).

May, Robert M. (1993). *Cosmic Consciousness Revisited: The Modern Origins and Development of a Western Spiritual Psychology*. Shaftesbury: Element.

Mayer, Paulo (1999). *Jena Romanticism and Its Appropriation of Jakob Böhme: Theosophy—Hagiography—Literature*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Melechi, Antonio (ed.) (1998). *Mindscapes: An Anthology of Drug Writings*. Baildon: Mono.

Mercer, Calvin, and Thomas W. Durham (1999). 'Religious mysticism and gender orientation'. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 38/1:175–82.

Mercer, John Edward (1905). *What is the World External to Mind? A Popular Exposition of One Aspect of Idealism, Being the Substance of Five Lectures*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson.

—— (1913). *Nature Mysticism*. London: George Allen.

—— (1917). *The Problem of Creation: An Attempt to Define the Character and Trend of the Cosmic Process*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Merkur, Dan (1998). *The Ecstatic Imagination: Psychedelic Experiences and the Psychoanalysis of Self-actualization*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

—— (1999). *Mystical Moments and Unitive Thinking*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Merlan, Philip (1963). *Monopsychism, Mysticism, Metaconsciousness: Problems of the Soul in the Neoaristotelian and Neoplatonic Tradition*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Montague, Margaret Prescott (1916). 'Twenty minutes of reality'. *The Atlantic Monthly*, 117/5: 592–7.

Moore, F. C. T. (1996). *Bergson: Thinking Backwards*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moore, John Morrison (1938). *Theories of Religious Experience, with Special Reference to James, Otto and Bergson*. New York: Round Table Press.

Moore, Peter (1977). 'Problems in the Analysis of Mystical Experience, with Special Reference to the Work of R. C. Zaehner, W. T. Stace and M. Laski'. Ph.D. thesis, University of Lancaster.

—— (1978). 'Mystical experience, mystical doctrine, mystical technique', in Steven T. Katz (ed.), *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 101–31.

—— (1990). 'Mysticism and religious experience', in Ursula King (ed.), *Turning Points in Religious Studies: Essays in Honour of Geoffrey Parrinder*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 242–53.

[Mortley, Alice] ((1910) 1997). *Christ in You*. Marina del Rey, Calif.: DeVorss.

Mosse, George L. (1966). *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Muller-Ortega, Paul E. (1996). 'Aspects of Jīvanmukti in the Tantric Śaivism of Kashmir', in Andrew O. Fort and Patricia Y. Mumme (eds.), *Living Liberation in Hindu Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 187–217.

Murphy, Michael, and Steven Donovan (1997). *The Physical and Psychological Effects of Meditation: A Review of Contemporary Research with a Comprehensive Bibliography, 1931–1996*, 2nd edn., ed. Eugene Taylor. Sausalito, Calif.: Institute of Noetic Sciences.

Murry, John Middleton (1929). *God: Being an Introduction to the Science of Metabiology*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Myers, F. W. H. (1903). *Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*. 2 vols. London: Longmans, Green.

Nash, Carroll B. (1976). 'Psi and the mind–body problem'. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 48/767: 267–70.

Naughton, Alex (1991). 'Buddhist omniscience'. *Eastern Buddhist*, NS 24/1: 28–51.

Nelson, John E. (1994). *Healing the Split: Integrating Spirit into Our Understanding of the Mentally Ill*, revised edn. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Neumann, Erich (1969). 'Mystical man' (Eranos Lecture, 1948), in Joseph Campbell (ed.), *The Mystic Vision*, trans. Ralph Manheim. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 375–415.

Newberg, Andrew B., Eugene d'Aquili, and Vince Rause (2001). *Why God Won't Go Away: Brain Science and the Biology of Belief*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Newell, William Lloyd (1981). *Struggle and Submission: R. C. Zaehner on Mysticisms*. Washington, D.C.: University Press of America.

Nield, Keith (1974). 'Carpenter, Edward (1844–1929)', in Joyce M. Bellamy and John Saville (eds.), *Dictionary of Labour Biography*, vol. ii. London: Macmillan, 85–93.

—— (1990). 'Edward Carpenter: The uses of utopia', in Tony Brown (ed.), *Edward Carpenter and Late Victorian Radicalism*. London: Frank Cass, 17–32.

Noll, Richard (1996). *The Jung Cult: The Origins of a Charismatic Movement*. London: Fontana Press, HarperCollins.

Odin, Steve (1982). *Process Metaphysics and Hua-yen Buddhism: A Critical Study of Cumulative Penetration vs. Interpenetration*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Olin, John C. (ed.) (1992). *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola, with Related Documents*, trans. Joseph F. O'Callaghan. New York: Fordham University Press.

Oppenheim, Janet (1985). *The Other World: Spiritualism and Psychical Research in England, 1850–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ornstein, Robert E. (1971). 'The techniques of meditation and their implications for modern psychology', in Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein (eds.), *On the Psychology of Meditation*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 137–234.

—— (1986). *The Psychology of Consciousness*, 2nd edn. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

—— (ed.) (1973). *The Nature of Human Consciousness: A Book of Readings*. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman.

Orofino, Giacomella (trans.) (1990). *Sacred Tibetan Teachings on Death and Liberation*. Bridport: Prism Press.

Otis, Laura (1994). *Organic Memory: History and the Body in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Otto, Rudolf (1923). *The Idea of the Holy*: *An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and Its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Otto, Rudolf (1931). *The Philosophy of Religion Based on Kant and Fries*, trans. E. B. Dickler. London: Williams & Norgate.

—— ((1932) 1987). *Mysticism East and West: A Comparative Analysis of the Nature of Mysticism*, trans. Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne. Wheaton, Ill.: Theosophical Publishing House.

Ouspensky, P. D. ((1912) 1990). *Tertium Organum: The Third Canon of Thought, A Key to the Enigmas of the World*. Harmondsworth: Arkana, Penguin.

Overall, Christine (1982). 'Mysticism, phenomenalism, and W. T. Stace'. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 18/2: 177–90.

Overzee, Anne Hunt (1992). *The Body Divine: The Symbol of the Body in the Works of Teilhard de Chardin and Rāmānuja*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Paffard, Michael (1973). *Inglorious Wordsworths: A Study of Some Transcendental Experiences in Childhood and Adolescence*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Pahnke, Walter H., and William A. Richards (1966). 'Implications of LSD and experimental mysticism'. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 5: 175–208; repr. in Charles T. Tart (ed.) (1990), *Altered States of Consciousness*, 3rd edn., New York: HarperSanFrancisco, HarperCollins.

Pandey, K. C. (1963). *Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study*, 2nd edn. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office.

Parnia, Sam, and Peter Fenwick (2002). 'Near death experiences in cardiac arrest: Visions of a dying brain or visions of a new science of consciousness'. *Resuscitation*, 52/1: 5–11.

Parnia, Sam, D. G. Waller, R. Yeates, and P. Fenwick (2001). 'A qualitative and quantitative study of the incidence, features and aetiology of near death experiences in cardiac arrest survivors'. *Resuscitation*, 48/2: 149–56.

Parrinder, Geoffrey (1976). 'Robert Charles Zaehner (1913–1974)'. *History of Religions*, 16/1: 66–74.

Parsons, William B. (1999). *The Enigma of the Oceanic Feeling: Revisioning the Psychoanalytic Theory of Mysticism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Peacocke, Arthur (1985). 'The case for reductionism in the sciences', in id. (ed.), *Reductionism in Academic Disciplines*. Guildford: Society for Research into Higher Education and NFER-Nelson, 7–16.

Pearson, Jo (2003). 'Ritual and religious experience: William James and the study of "Alternative Spiritualities"'. *Cross Currents*, 53/3. <http://www.crosscurrents.org/Pearsonfall2003.htm>.

Peers, E. Allison (trans. and ed.) (1946). *The Complete Works of Saint Teresa of Jesus*. 3 vols. London: Sheed & Ward.

Perovich Jr., Anthony N. (1985). 'Mysticism and the philosophy of science'. *Journal of Religion*, 65/1: 63–82.

—— (1990). 'Does the philosophy of mysticism rest on a mistake?', in Robert K. C. Forman (ed.), *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 237–53.

Perry, John Weir (1999). *Trials of the Visionary Mind: Spiritual Emergency and the Renewal Process*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Persinger, Michael A. (1983). 'Religious and mystical experiences as artifacts of temporal lobe function: A general hypothesis'. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 57/3.2: 1255–62.

—— (1987). *Neuropsychological Bases of God Beliefs*. New York: Praeger.

Poulain, Augustin-François (1921). *The Graces of Interior Prayer: A Treatise on Mystical Theology*, trans. Leonara L. Yorke Smith. London: Kegan Paul.

Price, H. H. (1960). 'Paranormal cognition and symbolism', in L. C. Knights and Basil Cottle (eds.), *Metaphor and Symbol*, Colston Papers, 12. London: Butterworths Scientific Publications, 78–94.

Priest, Stephen (1991). *Theories of the Mind*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Prince, Raymond, and Charles Savage (1966). 'Mystical states and the concept of regression'. *Psychedelic Review*, 8: 59–75; repr. in John White (ed.) (1972), *The Highest State of Consciousness*, Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 114–34.

Proudfoot, Wayne (1985). *Religious Experience*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Rahman, Tariq (1987). 'The alienated prophet: The relationship between Edward Carpenter's psyche and the development of his metaphysic'. *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 23/3: 193–209.

Raine, Kathleen (1975). *The Land Unknown*. London: Hamish Hamilton.

Ramachandran, V. S., and Sandra Blakeslee (1998). *Phantoms in the Brain: Human Nature and the Architecture of the Mind*. London: Fourth Estate.

Randrup, Axel (1997). 'An alternative to materialism: Converging evidence from nature spirituality and natural science'. *Cybernetics and Human Knowing*, 4/4: 15–24.

Rappe, Sara (2000). *Reading Neoplatonism: Non-discursive Thinking in the Texts of Plotinus, Proclus, and Damascius*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reed, Graham (1988). *The Psychology of Anomalous Experience: A Cognitive Approach*, revised edn. Buffalo: Prometheus Books.

Richards, Robert J. (1987). *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Riedel, Wolfgang (1996). *'Homo Natura': Literarische Anthropologie um 1900*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Ring, Kenneth (1984). *Heading Toward Omega: In Search of the Meaning of the Near-Death Experience*. New York: Quill, William Morrow.

Roberts, Bernadette (1993). *The Experience of No-Self: A Contemplative Journey*, revised edn. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Roberts, Jane (1970). *The Seth Material*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Roberts, Thomas B., and Paula Jo Hruby (eds.) (1995–2003). 'Religion and Psychoactive Sacraments: An Entheogen Chrestomathy'. <http://www.csp.org/chrestomathy/a_chrestomathy.html>.

Robinson, Edward (1977). *The Original Vision: A Study of the Religious Experience of Childhood*. Oxford: Religious Experience Research Unit.

Romanes, George John (1888). *Mental Evolution in Man: Origin of Human Faculty*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench.

—— (1895). *Mind and Motion and Monism*. London: Longmans, Green.

Roseman, Bernard (1968). *The Peyote Story: The Indian Mind Drug*, revised edn. Hollywood, Calif.: Wilshire Book Company.

Rothberg, Donald (1990). 'Contemporary epistemology and the study of mysticism', in Robert K. C. Forman (ed.), *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 163–210.

Rowbotham, Sheila (1977). 'Edward Carpenter: Prophet of the New Life', in Sheila Rowbotham and Jeffrey Weeks (eds.), *Socialism and the New Life: The Personal and Sexual Politics of Edward Carpenter and Havelock Ellis*. London: Pluto Press, 25–138.

Rutherford, Donald (1998). 'Leibniz and mysticism', in Allison P. Coudert, Richard H. Popkin, and Gordon M. Weiner (eds.), *Leibniz, Mysticism and Religion*. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 22–46.

Sannella, Lee (1976). *Kundalini: Psychosis or Transcendence?* San Francisco: H. S. Dakin.

Saunders, Nicholas, Anja Saunders, and Michelle Pauli (2000). *In Search of the Ultimate High: Spiritual Experiences through Psychoactives*. London: Rider.

Schiller, Friedrich ((1795) 1967). *On the Aesthetic Education of Man: In a Series of Letters*, ed. and trans. Elizabeth M. Wilkinson and L. A. Willoughby. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Schlamm, Leon (1991). 'Rudolf Otto and mystical experience'. *Religious Studies*, 27/3: 389–98.

—— (2000). 'C. G. Jung, mystical experience and inflation'. *Harvest*, 46/2: 108–28.

Schleiermacher, Friedrich ((1799) 1988). *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, ed. and trans. Richard Crouter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Schmidt, Leigh Eric (2003). 'The making of modern "mysticism" '. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 71/2: 273–302.

Scholem, Gershom (1961). *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3rd revised edn. New York: Schocken Books.

—— (1969). *On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism*, trans. Ralph Manheim. New York: Schocken Books.

Schroeder, Theodore (1922). 'Prenatal psychisms and mystical pantheism'. *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 3/4: 445–66.

Schürmann, Reiner (1978). *Meister Eckhart: Mystic and Philosopher*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Seager, William (1995). 'Consciousness, information and panpsychism'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 2/3: 272–88.

—— (1999). *Theories of Consciousness: An Introduction and Assessment*. London: Routledge.

—— (2001). 'Panpsychism', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, summer 2001 edn. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2001/entries/panpsychism/>.

Segal, Robert A. (1983). 'In defense of reductionism'. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 51/1: 97–124.

Segal, Suzanne (1998). *Collision with the Infinite: A Life beyond the Personal Self*, 2nd edn. San Diego: Blue Dove Press.

Shamdasani, Sonu (1998). 'From Geneva to Zürich: Jung and French Switzerland'. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 43/1: 115–26.

—— (2003). *Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology: The Dream of a Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sharf, Robert H. (1998). 'Experience', in Mark C. Taylor (ed.), *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 94–116.

Shear, Jonathan (1994). 'On mystical experiences as support for the perennial philosophy'. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 62/2: 319–42.

—— (2001). 'Experimental studies of meditation and consciousness', in Diane Jonte-Pace and William B. Parsons (eds.), *Religion and Psychology: Mapping the Terrain*. London: Routledge, 280–94.

Shear, Jonathan, and Ron Jevning (1999). 'Pure consciousness: Scientific exploration of meditation techniques'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 6/2–3: 189–209.

Sherwood Taylor, Frank (1945). *The Fourfold Vision: A Study of the Relations of Science and Religion*. London: Chapman & Hall.

Shortt, S. E. D. (1986). *Victorian Lunacy: Richard M. Bucke and the Practice of Late Nineteenth-Century Psychiatry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

—— (1994). 'Bucke, Richard Maurice', in Ramsay Cook and Jean Hamelin (eds.), *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. xiii (1901–10). Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 122–6.

Silburn, Lilian (1988). *Kuṇḍalinī: The Energy of the Depths*, trans. Jacques Gontier. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Sims, Andrew (1988). *Symptoms in the Mind: An Introduction to Descriptive Psychopathology*. London: Baillière Tindall.

Singh, Jaideva (1982). *Pratyabhijñāhṛdayam: The Secret Doctrine of Self-Recognition*, 4th revised edn. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Sjørup, Lene (1997). 'Mysticism and gender'. *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 13/2: 45–68.

Skrbina, David (2003). 'Panpsychism as an underlying theme in Western philosophy: A survey paper'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 10/3: 4–46.

Smart, Ninian (1958). *Reasons and Faiths: An Investigation of Religious Discourse, Christian and Non-Christian*. London: Routledge.

—— (1962). 'Mystical experience'. *Sophia*, 1/1: 19–26.

—— (1968). *The Yogi and the Devotee: The Interplay between the Upanishads and Catholic Theology*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Smith, Allan L., and Charles T. Tart (1998). 'Cosmic consciousness experience and psychedelic experiences: A first person comparison'. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 5/1: 97–107.

Smith, James Ward (1968). 'Memorial minutes: Walter Terence Stace 1886–1967'. *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 41: 136–8.

Smythies, John R. (1994). *The Walls of Plato's Cave: The Science and Philosophy of (Brain, Consciousness and Perception)*. Aldershot: Avebury, Ashgate.

Sogyal Rinpoche (1992). *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*. London: Random House.

Sprigge, T. L. S. (1983). *The Vindication of Absolute Idealism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

—— (1984). 'Non-human rights: An idealist perspective'. *Inquiry*, 27/4: 439–61.

—— (1987). 'Are there intrinsic values in nature?' *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 4/1: 21–8.

—— (1991). 'Some recent positions in environmental ethics examined. Review discussion'. *Inquiry*, 34/1: 107–28.

—— (1993). *James and Bradley: American Truth and British Reality*. Chicago: Open Court.

—— (1996). 'Idealism, humanism and the environment', in Paul Coates and Daniel D. Hutto (eds.), *Current Issues in Idealism*. Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 267–304.

—— (1997). 'Pantheism'. *The Monist*, 80/2: 191–217.

—— (1998). 'Panpsychism', in Edward Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. vii. London: Routledge, 195–7.

Staal, Frits (1975). *Exploring Mysticism: A Methodological Essay*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Stace, W. T. (1932). *The Theory of Knowledge and Existence*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

—— ((1940) 1969). *The Nature of the World: An Essay in Phenomenalist Metaphysics*. New York: Greenwood Press.

—— ((1948) 1967). 'Man against darkness', in id., *Man Against Darkness, and Other Essays*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 3–17.

—— (1949*a*). 'Metaphysics and existence'. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 9/3: 458–62.

—— (1949*b*). 'Naturalism and religion'. *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 23: 22–46.

—— (1952*a*). *The Gate of Silence*. Boston: Beacon Press.

—— (1952*b*). *Time and Eternity: An Essay in the Philosophy of Religion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

—— (1953). *Religion and the Modern Mind*. London: Macmillan.

—— (1960). *The Teachings of the Mystics*. New York: Mentor, New American Library.

—— (1961). *Mysticism and Philosophy*, 1st British edn. London: Macmillan.

—— (1967*a*). *Man Against Darkness, and Other Essays*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

—— (1967*b*). 'The philosophy of mysticism' (Mount Holyoke Lecture, 1961), in id., *Man Against Darkness, and Other Essays*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 37–52.

—— (1967*c*). 'The psychology of mysticism' (Mount Holyoke Lecture, 1961), in id., *Man Against Darkness, and Other Essays*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 18–36.

Starr, Irina (1991). *The Sound of Light: Experiencing the Transcendental*. Ojai, Calif.: The Pilgrim's Path.

Staveley, Lilian ((1919) 1982). *The Golden Fountain, or, The Soul's Love for God: Being Some Thoughts and Confessions of One of His Lovers*. Bloomington, Ind.: World Wisdom Books.

Stoeber, Michael (1994). *Theo-monistic Mysticism: A Hindu–Christian Comparison*. New York: St Martin's Press.

Sutcliffe, Steven (1998). 'Between apocalypse and self-realisation: "Nature" as an index of New Age religiosity', in Joanne Pearson, Richard H. Roberts, and Geoffrey Samuel (eds.), *Nature Religion Today: Paganism in the Modern World*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 33–44.

Sutton, Florin Giripescu (1991). *Existence and Enlightenment in the* Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra: *A Study in the Ontology and Epistemology of the Yogācāra School of Mahāyāna Buddhism*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro (1970). *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, First Series, 3rd edn. London: Rider.

Talbot, C. H. (trans.) (1959). *The Life of Christina of Markyate: A Twelfth Century Recluse*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Taliaferro, Charles (1994). *Consciousness and the Mind of God*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, Eugene (1996*a*). 'The new Jung scholarship'. *Psychoanalytic Review*, 83/4: 547–68.

—— (1996*b*). *William James on Consciousness beyond the Margin*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

—— (1998). 'Jung before Freud, not Freud before Jung: The reception of Jung's work in American psychoanalytic circles between 1904 and 1909'. *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, 43/1: 97–114.

—— (1999). *Shadow Culture: Psychology and Spirituality in America*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint.

Thomas, L. E. (1997). 'Late-life effect of early mystical experiences: A cross-cultural comparison'. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 11/2: 155–69.

Thouless, R. H., and B. P. Wiesner (1947). 'The psi processes in normal and "paranormal" psychology'. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 48/174: 177–96.

Traherne, Thomas (1958). *Centuries, Poems, and Thanksgivings*, ed. H. M. Margoliouth. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Tsuzuki, Chushichi (1980). *Edward Carpenter, 1844–1929: Prophet of Human Fellowship*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, Denys (1995). *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Turner, Frank Miller (1974). *Between Science and Religion: The Reaction to Scientific Naturalism in Late Victorian England*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Uhlfelder, Myra L. (trans.) (1967). *The Dialogues of Gregory the Great: Book Two*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

Underhill, Evelyn ((1912) 1988). 'Bergson and the mystics', in Dana Greene (ed.), *Evelyn Underhill: Modern Guide to the Ancient Quest for the Holy*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 49–60.

—— ((1930) 1993). *Mysticism: The Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*, 12th edn. Oxford: Oneworld.

van Lommel, Pim, Ruud van Wees, Vincent Meyers, and Ingrid Elfferich (2001). 'Near-death experience in survivors of cardiac arrest: A prospective study in the Netherlands'. *Lancet*, 358 (15 December): 2039–45.

von Hügel, Baron Friedrich (1908). *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends*. 2 vols. London: J. M. Dent.

Wade, Jenny (1996). *Changes of Mind: A Holonomic Theory of the Evolution of Consciousness*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

—— (2000). 'The love that dares not speak its name', in Tobin Hart, Peter L. Nelson, and Kaisa Puhakka (eds.), *Transpersonal Knowing: Exploring the Horizon of Consciousness*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 271–302.

—— (2004). *Transcendent Sex: When Lovemaking Opens the Veil*. New York: Paraview Pocket Books.

Wainwright, William J. (1970). 'Stace and mysticism'. *Journal of Religion*, 50/2: 139–54.

—— (1981). *Mysticism: A Study of Its Nature, Cognitive Value and Moral Implications*. Brighton: Harvester Press.

Wallis, Richard T. (1976). 'ΝΟΥΣ as experience', in R. Baine Harris (ed.), *The Significance of Neoplatonism*. Norfolk, Va.: International Society for Neoplatonic Studies, 121–53.

Ward, James (1899). *Naturalism and Agnosticism*. 2 vols. London: Adam & Charles Black.

Ward, R. H. (1957). *A Drug-Taker's Notes*. London: Victor Gollancz.

Washburn, Michael (1994). *Transpersonal Psychology in Psychoanalytic Perspective*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

—— (1995). *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground: A Transpersonal Theory of Human Development*, 2nd edn. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Weeks, Andrew (1993). *German Mysticism from Hildegard of Bingen to Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Literary and Intellectual History*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Weir, Lorna (1995). 'Cosmic consciousness and the love of comrades: Contacts between R. M. Bucke and Edward Carpenter'. *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*, 30/2: 39–57.

Whyte, L. L. (1962). *The Unconscious before Freud*. London: Tavistock.

Wieman, Henry Nelson ((1926) 1970). *Religious Experience and Scientific Method*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.

—— (1959). 'The problem of mysticism', in Alfred P. Stiernotte (ed.), *Mysticism and the Modern Mind*. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 21–42.

Wilber, Ken (ed.) (1982). *The Holographic Paradigm and Other Paradoxes: Exploring the Leading Edge of Science*. Boston: New Science Library, Shambhala.

Willis, Janice Dean (1979). *On Knowing Reality: The Tattvārtha Chapter of Asaṅga's* Bodhisattvabhūmi. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Wilmshurst, W. L. (1928). *Contemplations: Being Studies in Christian Mysticism*, revised and enlarged edn. London: J. M. Watkins.

Wozniak, Robert H. (1998). *Classics in Psychology, 1855–1914: Historical Essays*. Bristol: Thoemmes Press.

Wren-Lewis, John (1988). 'The darkness of God: A personal report of consciousness transformation through an encounter with death'. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 28/2: 105–22.

—— (1991). 'A reluctant mystic: God-consciousness not guru worship'. *Self and Society*, 19/2: 4–11.

—— (1994). 'Death knell of the guru system? Perfectionism versus enlightenment'. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 34/2: 46–61.

Wulff, David M. (1997). *Psychology of Religion: Classic and Contemporary*, 2nd edn. New York: Wiley.

Wulff, David M. (2000). 'Mystical experience', in Etzel Cardeña, Steven Jay Lynn, and Stanley Krippner (eds.), *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Evidence*. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 397–440.

Yogananda, Paramahansa (1993). *Autobiography of a Yogi*, revised edn. London: Rider.

Younghusband, Francis (1935). *Modern Mystics*. London: John Murray.

Zaehner, R. C. (1957). *Mysticism Sacred and Profane: An Inquiry into Some Varieties of Praeternatural Experience*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

—— (1958). *At Sundry Times: An Essay in the Comparison of Religions*. London: Faber & Faber.

—— (1960). *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*. London: Athlone Press.

—— (1970). *Concordant Discord: The Interdependence of Faiths*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

—— (1972). *Drugs, Mysticism and Make-Believe*. London: Collins.

—— (1974*a*). 'Mysticism without love'. *Religious Studies*, 10/3: 257–64; repr. in id. (1980), *The City Within the Heart*, London: Unwin, 16–26.

—— (1974*b*). *Our Savage God*. London: Collins.

—— (1980). *The City Within the Heart*. London: Unwin.

Zaleski, Carol (1987). *Otherworld Journeys: Accounts of Near-Death Experience in Medieval and Modern Times*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Index