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Capitalizing on the constructivist approach developed by philosophers and psychologists, Steven Katz argues that mystical experience is in part constructed, shaped and colored by the concepts and beliefs which the mystic brings to it. Merits and problems of this constructivist account of mysticism are discussed. The approach is seen to be ill-suited to explain the novelties and surprises for which mysticism is renowned. A new model is suggested: that mysticism is produced by a process similar to forgetting. Two forms of forgetting are described: a massive and complete forgetting of concepts in the "pure consciousness event" and deautomatization in the more permanent unitive experiences.

I. *Mysticism as a Result of Construction*

In this article I would like to address the issue which to me stands at the nub of the debate about the philosophical nature of mysticism: should mysticism be thought of as "constructed" somewhat like ordinary experiences or should it be seen as the result of another kind of process?[1] The notion that ordinary experiences are "shaped" or "constructed" by our conceptual system has become what is arguably the reigning metaphor in the humanities today. It was perhaps inevitable that scholars would one day apply this metaphor to mysticism.[2] One of the most renowned exponents of this view has been Steven Katz in his two books, and especially in his article, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism," who argues outspokenly that mystical experience is the result of such a shaping process, or as he says at one point, "the mind is active in constructing 'X as experienced.'"[3] In this article I will question the applicability of this constructivist metaphor to mystical experience and suggest a new model for it. Two prefatory remarks: First, following Ninian Smart, I propose limiting the discussion to those mystical experiences which are "certain interior experiences which are not described in terms of sense experience or mental images, etc."[4] Mystics such as Shankara, Eckhart, and Zen adepts will thereby be the subjects under discussion, while visionaries, however interesting, will not.[5] The rationale is that this article is concerned with the etiology of the particulars of mystical experience. Since both the phenomenology and the physiological characteristics of these two forms of experience are markedly different, it seems plausible to assume that their respective etiologies also differ.[6] So as not to confuse what are apparently different

formative processes, I shall confine myself to these experiences for the nonce, leaving for another work a more complete account of the full range of mystical phenomena. Secondly, to the extent that we each share in the constructivist *weltanschauung*, the acceptance of the new model I propose may require the suspension of certain dearly-held epistemological presuppositions in order to go at mysticism afresh.

What is this constructivist model? Katz himself introduces it in terms of perceptual psychology, and this is a good way to gain access to it. It looks something like this: an enormous array of sounds, light waves, magnetic waves, smells, chemical and electrical impulses within ourselves, etc. constantly bombard us. We use our systems in such a way that we first sift, discard and simplify much of the incoming information to allow only a few of its possible dimensions into our awareness. Second, we further sort and organize the incoming information into a very few dimensions and patterns, by means of which we impose a form on what we see and hear. The schema by means of which we construct and shape our thoughts and perceptions have been called "personal constructs," "categories" or "belief systems," "formularies," etc. One feature of this constructive process which plays an important role in Katz's article has been described by the perceptual psychologist, Heinz Hartmann. He writes that when a behavioral or perceptual pattern is repeated often enough, it becomes automatized:

> In well-established achievements they [motor apparatuses] function automatically: the integration of the somatic systems involved in the action is automatized, and so is the integration of the individual mental acts involved in it. With increasing exercise of the action its intermediate steps disappear from consciousness . . . not only motor behavior but perception and thinking, too, show automatization . . .[7]

A good example of an automatization is the unthinking way we drive a car. The automaticity of such complex processes may be viewed as an adaptation, an energy saving short-cut, which allows us to perform our average expectable range of tasks without reinventing the wheel at every step. That automatization is important for Katz's constructivist account of mysticism can be seen not only from his language,[8] but in the only "non-controversial example" he provides in which one's schemata can be seen to be clearly constructing an experience. It concerns Manet's painting of Notre Dame:

> [B]eliefs shape experience, just as experience shapes belief. . . . consider Manet's paintings of Notre Dame. Manet 'knew' Notre Dame was a Gothic cathedral, and so 'saw' it as a Gothic cathedral as testified to by his paintings which present Notre Dame with Gothic archways. Yet close examination will reveal that certain of the archways of Notre

> Dame which Manet painted as Gothic are in fact Romanesque. As
> Coleridge reminded us: 'the mind half-sees and half-creates'.[9]

This example is excellent for from it we can easily see how Manet's experience
was shaped by his perceptual automatizations. The visual information before
him was of Romanesque (i.e., rounded) archways. Due to his expectation that
he would see a Gothic (i.e., pointed) archway, he *altered* the visual information
before him and instead saw pointed archways. He overlooked what was there
and *substituted* for it something that was not there.[10] The psychologist E. H.
Gombrich (to whom Katz refers in a gloss) specifies the kind of processes
involved when concepts shape visual experiences.

> The individual visual information . . . [is] entered, as it were, upon a
> pre-existing blank or formulary. And, as often happens with blanks, if
> they have no provisions for certain kinds of information we consider
> essential, it is just too bad for the information.[11]

This commonly studied process is one of replacing one segment of visual data
with another due to perceptual habits or automatizations.[12] Imposing our automati-
zations, we see what we expect to see.

Katz's portrait of mystical experience as constructed is not far from this one.
Although sometimes Katz and his colleagues seem to imply that the experience
is constructed *ex nihilo* from expectations,[13] typically he makes the more modest
assertion that concepts and beliefs "shape" and "color"—i.e., lend significant
content or form to—the experience, much as Manet's expectations did to his
vision.[14]

> [A]s a result of his process of intellectual acculturation in its broadest
> sense, the mystic brings to his experience a world of concepts, images,
> symbols, and values which *shape* as well as *color* the experience he
> eventually and actually has. (46) (Italics mine)

Where a mystical experience differs from an ordinary perceptual experience like
Manet's is that the schema which serves as a formulary for the perception is a
new one adopted from the subject's religious or mystical tradition.

> Properly understood, yoga, for example, is not an unconditioning or
> deconditioning of consciousness, but rather it is a *re*conditioning of
> consciousness, i.e. a substituting of one form of conditioned and/or
> contextual consciousness for another, albeit a new, unusual, and perhaps
> altogether more interesting form of conditioned-contextual conscious-
> ness.[15]

The mystic's epistemological process is thus essentially identical with the ordinary

ones—only the mystic is substituting a new set of formula for the old. To extend the analogy, if Manet learned something *new* about Gothic arches and then mis-painted in *those* terms, he would be substituting one automatization for another, and would be having an experience whose epistemological structure paralleled the mystic's.

This constructivist approach has several compelling merits. First, given the plausibility and widespread acceptance of this picture of most experiences as in part constructed, it is credible. With reference to mysticism, the account cannot but make stand in relief the distinctions between mystics found in different traditions. These are not inconsiderable virtues.

However, despite these virtues, in addressing the mystical data itself the approach has four significant failings which I think militate strongly against its acceptance. The first concerns the pure consciousness (PC) event, in which one is awake but devoid of objects for attention. There is so much evidence for this state that Prigge and Kessler make it the *sine qua non* of mysticism.[16] Katz's thesis requires that there must be complex epistemological construction even here. Thus he is driven to claim that reports of PC be *mistaken*, that "there is no pure consciousness *per se*."[17] But as Bernhardt and Perovich both have argued, there just doesn't seem to be enough complexity in these quiet moments to warrant this claim.

> In fact it is hard to see how one could say that the pure consciousness event is mediated, if by that it is meant that *during* the event the mystic is employing concepts, differentiating his awareness according to religious patterns and symbols, drawing upon memory, apprehension, expectation, language or accumulation of prior experience, or discriminating and integrating. It just does not seem that there is sufficient complexity during the pure consciousness event to say that any such elements are involved.[18]

Devoid of an object of attention it is hard to see what X is being constructed, as Katz put it. By drawing a parallel with developments in the philosophy of science, Perovich has argued in the *Journal of Religion* for a second failing, the theory's incompleteness, for from Katz we have no thoroughgoing account specifying which concepts are and are not involved in the formation of mystical experience. Hence we are left with no reason to think that a changed belief in even some half-forgotten fact would not lead inevitably to a change in experience.[19] A third failing has to do with Katz's textual strategy, which is overly monodimensional. When he writes that the *only* evidence one can call on is the recording of a mystic, and that this is already interpreted, this denies out of hand that something near to raw phenomenological reports are even possible. Furthermore, Katz *et al.* limit the data to textual sources exclusively, yet through

interviews with living mystics one may be able to ask questions which the mystic may not have asked himself—e.g., which interpretations do and do not predate and hence possibly play a role in an experience.

However rather than pursuing these matters I would prefer to focus on a fourth shortcoming of the theory for this will lead to the alternative model I would like to put forward. At heart we have here an hypothesis about the cause or formation of mystical experiences. It is an inherently conservative one, that expectations and models "contribute heavily to the creation—I repeat to the *creation* of [mystical] experience,"[20] and that as a result of holding particular expectations a mystic will have an experience which matches them. While it is true that most classical texts attest to the match between experience and expectations, those expectations may precede but not cause the experience (there may be a contingent but not a necessary connection between them[21]]. One way to determine the causal role of expectations is to look at cases in which they were contravened. These cases raise doubts about the hypothesis that expectations play a "heavy" formative role.

There are two types of cases in which expectations are disconfirmed. First it is not unusual to hear of an untrained and uninitiated neophyte who has a mystical experience without any deep preconditioning. Paul's experience on the road to Damascus comes to mind, for this came upon him literally and figuratively out of the blue and transformed him 180°.[22] More compelling perhaps are the cases of Richard Maurice Bucke, author of the early 20th century book *Cosmic Consciousness*, and Bernadette Roberts, author of the recent *The Experience of No Self*, both of whom came to their mystical experiences without the requisite preconditioning.[23] I recently interviewed a 28-year old male whose first mystical experience, at 15, was utterly unanticipated.[24] In each case the subjects had undeniably mystical experiences and were led *to* religious texts, doctrines, and living exponents by their experiences; not the other way around. Religious and mystical understandings of their experiences did come, but only months and years after the experiences. What deeply assimilated and automatized "mystical" categories may have played the constructive role which "created" their respective experiences?

Perhaps it will be argued that a Bucke or a Roberts, simply by virtue of a life lived in the U.S., which is so deeply informed by the Judeo-Christian Weltanschauung, acquired the appropriate mystical identificatory terms.[25] There is some plausibility to this—let us call it the prefigurement by osmosis argument— though not, it will be granted, as much as has the theory on its home, conservative, turf. Or Paul, it may be argued, was unconsciously persuaded by his opposition's arguments, and that persuasion came out as Christ-audition. Again there is some plausibility to this, the reverse prefigurement argument. But at best the theory starts to sound *ad hoc* and lacking in the kind of elegance we expect from a

hypothesis. A conservative theory has difficulty accounting for creative novelty.

A second type of divergence between expectation and experience occurs to the initiated and intellectually assimilated. When Teresa of Avila reports that until she underwent her experiences she "did not know what [she] was doing" she alludes to the irrelevance of her expectations.[26] On a neo-advaitan path I myself underwent an experience in which a series of bands or tubes running up the back of my neck and into my cranium became, one by one and from left to right, absolutely silent and transparent. I had never heard or read of such bands or tubes—and indeed have not yet. Similarly, before a 36-year old female practitioner of the transcendental meditation program I interviewed gained a higher state of consciousness (my term, not hers) she experienced some finger-like sensations atop her head which opened-up like flower petals.[27] In each of these cases, the key feature is novelty—not just any novelty, but one which seems to stand at the very nub of the alteration. In every case the mode of transformation was utterly unexpected, and surprising.[28] Something besides expectations and beliefs seems to be playing the decisive formative role in such events. Furthermore it is rare that a mystic does not report *surprise* over his or her experiences.[29]

Before one imposes some formula onto experience, certainly one must have become acquainted with it. Though it is logically possible that one could be merely superficially so acquainted, for the hypothesis to ring true we would expect to see signs of a deep and thoroughgoing acquaintance with that formulary before constructing in its terms. Manet would not have been likely to mistake a round archway for a pointed one had he not a thoroughgoing acquaintance with things Gothic. Yet here we have cases in which there is not only no thoroughgoing acquaintance, but no acquaintance at all with the particularities of one's experiences. Does it not seem that Manet's visual automatisms and mystical transformations are not analogous—the data just doesn't fit into the framework—and that some causal factor besides automatizations is at work here?

Let us look at the matter on its own terms, without imposing presuppositions derived from ordinary experience.

II. *Mysticism as a Result of "Forgetting"*

As a first step let us see what a few mystics say about what is going on in the production of their experiences. Eckhart, about whom I have recently completed a book, writes:

> . . . the more completely you are able to draw in your [intellectual and sensory] powers to a unity and *forget* all those things and their [mental] images which you have absorbed . . . the nearer you are to [this experience][30]

> To achieve an interior act, a man must collect all his powers as if into
> a corner of his soul . . . *hiding away* from all images and forms . . .
> Here, he must come to a *forgetting* and an *un*knowing.[31]

The key technique by means of which Eckhart here (and elsewhere) instructs
his listeners to bring about the experience he advocates is: a turning away from
ideas and conceptual forms, a *gelazen*—letting them go: a retreat from thought;
an "unknowing" in Pseudo-Dionysius's term; or, as Eckhart prefers to put it, a
vergessen, forgetting. A similar notion of leaving thoughts behind is put forward
by the Zen Roshi, Rosen Takashina, who speaks of being "without thoughts."
We are to stop the workings of the thinking mind, he writes:

> [This] means to cut off at the root and source *all our discriminating*
> *fancies*. . . .'In Zen the important thing is to stop the course of the
> heart.' It means to stop the workings of our empirical consciousness,
> the mass of thoughts, ideas and perceptions.[32]

When Takashina and Eckhart say that we "must" cut off or forget thoughts,
I understand them as giving some sort of instruction. What is the nature of this
forgetting they are signalling? There are three basic meanings of "forget." I think
they are not prescribing a forgetting in the first sense: to permanently lose the
remembrance of—as in "I once knew it but I have forgotten the year's of Kant's
birth." For in speaking at all, the mystics clearly *can* remember images, forms
etc., and so they have not permanently lost memory. Nor do they intend a
second, behavioral, meaning: to omit or disregard unintentionally, as in "I forgot
to bring my keys." This is a countervolitional meaning, and these mystics are
inviting the listener to forget something *intentionally*. I think that they mean
something nearer to the third sense of forget: to disregard intentionally, to pur-
posely ignore, as in "Forget about the insult," or "Disregard what you heard
about ghosts." One may understand and be *capable of* remembering something
but for some reason one intentionally lays aside this knowledge or capacity.

If someone said to Manet "forget what you know of Gothic arches and look
over there," they would be using the term in this sense. Hearing this Manet
would intentionally lay aside his "Gothic" blanks or formularies and look at the
visual information before him. He would not forget "Gothic" in the permanent
sense, for he could presumably recall the nature of a Gothic arch at will. Rather
he would forget it in the sense of doing without his Gothic formula for the nonce.
If he was good at this, for however long he forgot it, his Gothic arch formula
would play *no* significant part in determining the characteristics of his painting,
any more than did his equally forgotten memories of say ogee (onion-domed)

arches, or even more absurdly, the forgotten maiden name of his mother.[33] In other words, if I have understood the sense of "forget" intended by these mystics, then Katz has the Manet example backwards. The mystic's technique seems more akin to Manet's forgetting "Gothicness" than remembering and superimposing it. We may define the mystical use of forget as a more or less temporary holding of some conceptual formula in abeyance.

But, you are perhaps thinking, not much is gained so far. It may be true that on being told to "forget Gothicness and look" Manet might come to cease applying his Gothic formulary; but certainly he would not do without *all* formula or constructions whatsoever. Probably he will simply replace one formula with another—say Romanesque—or if that doesn't suit, adapt and modify that one still further until the fit is pretty close.[34] Such a process of replacing one schema with another and altering it is perfectly in accord with the constructivist picture—that we move from one conditioned and constructed form of consciousness to another.

Here however is one of the places wherein my Manet analogy with mystical experience falls short. Rosen Takashina did not say substitute one form of discrimination for another but rather "cut off . . . *all* our discriminating fancies." Eckhart said that the more you can forget your ideas the nearer you will come to the experience he advocates—implying that the experience comes by dropping "ideas and forms" *altogether*. Manet would trade schemata, these men counsel some form of dropping them altogether.

How might a mystic bring himself to forget on a massive scale?

Non-mystical techniques which bring about a forgetting typically involve repetition of a subroutine. One of the simplest was developed by a group of physiological psychologists who mounted a tiny projector on a contact lens. This device caused a visual image to remain constant on the retina, despite movements of the eyeball. The effect on awareness of this constant stimulus was that the image tended to disappear: it was *forgotten* if you will. A similar effect is produced when an observer is placed in a so-called *ganzfeld*, a completely patternless visual field. A whitewashed surface or a blizzard can serve as a ganzfeld, as can two halves of a ping-pong ball taped over the eyes. Ganzfeld observers consistently reported what they called "blackout":

> not merely the experience of seeing nothing but that of not seeing, a complete disappearance of the sense of vision for short periods . . . During blackout the observers did not know, for instance, whether their eyes were open or not . . . continuous uniform stimulation resulted in the failure of any kind of image to be produced in consciousness.[35]

Rather than a shift from one image to another being constructed by the mind, these techniques bring about something like a complete forgetting of the sense

of vision.

Turning to mystical techniques, Ornstein and Naranjo have suggested that the common meditative practices of restricting awareness to a single unchanging process may have a parallel structure as this constant visual stimulus. The object for attention may be in any sense mode: it may be verbal (mantras, dervish calls or short prayers), visual (like a yantra or a guru's picture), or the concentration may be held on a regular bodily process like the heartbeat or the breath. It does not seem to matter which actual physical practice is followed; what seems critical is the

> attempt to *recycle the same subroutine over and over again* in the nervous system. . . . The specific object of meditation (for this analysis) is much less important than maintaining the object as the single focus of awareness over a long period of time.[36]

The effect of such a recycling of a single subroutine parallels that of the ganzfeld or the constant visual image: not merely does the recycled stimulus itself ultimately fade, but there is a complete disappearance of any sense of thinking, perceiving etc. All perception and mental activity are, in a word, *forgotten*. The vacuous state of emptiness so produced, it should be clear, is not like remembering something and shaping visual information in its terms; it is closer to a massive forgetting.

There is a second type of commonly used mystical practice: Ornstein and Naranjo have called this the technique of "opening up." They introduce it in terms of the notion of automatized stereotyped formularies. In the technique of "opening up" the practitioner is taught to become aware of his/her automatized perceptual and cognitive habits and cease perceiving and behaving in their terms:

> The Sufi and other traditions contend that the selective and restricted nature of awareness is an obstacle to be overcome and that the process of meditation, among other exercises, is a way of turning down the restrictions that normally limit awareness. One specific aim in these traditions is the removal of the automaticity and selectivity of ordinary awareness.[37]

The aim of such techniques is to bring about a new perceptual mode which employs no such automatizations. It is an attempt to "deautomatize"—in Gill and Brenman's term—or undo an automatized apparatus.[38] To remove an automatism is to intentionally hold it in abeyance: to forget it.

A third technique, usually found in conjunction with one or both of the others is renunciation. This technique serves to reinforce this forgetting process by reducing the "nutriment" of certain kinds of structures. When belongings, friendships and sexual partners as well as the desires for such—which had served

as the reinforcing stimuli of perceptual and cognitive structures—are reduced, their corresponding cognitive and psychic structures tend to be weakened and even disrupted, which again leads to their deautomatization.[39] Renunciations's effect is again not to replace one habit and set of structures with other equivalent ones but to forget such altogether.

These techniques, if successful, result in two related but distinguishable forms of forgetting. The meditative process results in the pure consciousness event, in which every idea, percept and sensation is temporarily forgotten. This may be viewed as the result of a massive and total forgetting of all perceptual and cognitive activity. The second form of forgetting, that of deautomatization, can be permanent and experienced in activity. It is brought about, as I noted, by the "opening up" technique and by meditation. Meditation brings deautomatization about by systematically disallowing some or all ratiocinative processes. As is seen in sensory isolation experiments, such a temporary abstention from ordinary cognitive functions can be expected to decrease the reinforcement or psychic nutriment of their habits, and as a result those habits may come to lose their automatized status. Especially when used alongside an "opening up" technique, meditation will result in the deautomatization of many of one's cognitive processes, thoughts, perceptual habits, etc.

> The practice of meditation, then, can be considered as an attempt to turn off conceptual activity temporarily, to shut off all input processing for a period of time, to get away for a while from the external environment.
>
> A result of this "turning off" of our input selection systems is that, when we introduce the same sensory input later, we see it differently, "anew" [i.e. without the mediation of the old automatized habits].[40]

Some of those old behavioral and perceptual habits will be simply forgotten in the sense that one will cease to employ them altogether. In other cases one will come to forget in the subtler sense of employing constructions while remaining aware that they are but constructions. This will be a seeing in terms of one's formularies, yet holding them simultaneously in abeyance.[41] Were Manet to paint the arch as Gothic and simultaneously to see that this was inaccurate, he would have deautomatized his perceptual category (forgotten it as an automatic one) and yet have continued to use it voluntarily. Katz's plea for the recognition of differences will apply here for despite remaining conscious of their nature as conventional, to the extent that one thinks in their terms the concepts one uses will remain context dependent.

I should point out that what is forgotten altogether in the pure consciousness event and what is deautonatized in activity is expressly stated to include the very teachings of the mystical traditions itself. When Eckhart talks for example about

gelazen, letting go, he expressly includes all notions of God—and his own belief system—as part of that which must be given up.[42] When the Zen aphorism says, "If you see Buddha on the road, kill him," it is stating a similar requirement: all beliefs and emotional attachments to one's own Buddhist interpretive categories must be "killed"—that is intentionally forgotten—before the final goal can be achieved.[43]

I am making no argument for universality here. It is not clear to me that *all* traditions harness the forgetting technique, or that all techniques *are* equally effective. This can only be determined case by case. Rather the claim is more modest: when a tradition uses techniques which effect a forgetting, then automatization and concepts may not play the "heavy" formative role Katz gives them. In general a forgotten concept—be it Manet's concept of Gothic or his mother's maiden name—plays no role in an experience. If something is truly forgotten it does not form or cause or mediate or construct an experience. If in objectless consciousness all concepts are indeed forgotten, then they will play *no* constructive role during the event.

But this model—especially as it applies to the pure consciousness event—does have an interesting result for the pluralism question, that of the similarity of experience between two traditions which do harness the forgetting technique. If Manet forgot Gothicness and Picasso forgot Gothicness, we would still expect them to paint the archways differently, for there are so many other formularies and constructs involved in perception that they would still not see alike. However the story changes if two or more people were able to forget *everything* for awhile. Strange to say, but a *ganzfeld* would produce an indistinguishable visual experience for Picasso or Manet. Both are without content, image formation, etc. Similarly if a Buddhist, Hindu or African forgot every thought, sensation, emotion, etc., then no historically conditioned idea, form, category or even sensory information would remain conscious to differentiate the resultant events from one to another.[44] A formless trance in Buddhism may be experientially indistinguishable from one in Hinduism or Christianity. This model swings the pendulum back towards the perennial philosophy camp, that mysticism is alike from one culture to another.

I think in the last analysis the choice comes down to one of informing models. Shall we employ a model which was developed to account for ordinary perceptual, conceptual and affective experience—and does so remarkably well all in all? Or shall we employ an explanatory model for these atypical experiences which grows organically out of the instructions for and nature of this experience? That the "forgetting" model takes the actual techniques used to bring about mystical experiences with utmost seriousness is one of its greatest strengths. When a Meister Eckhart says, "if only you could suddenly be unaware of all things . . ." and have neither memory, nor understanding, nor senses function, this paradigm

does not have to say that he is making a *mistake*. Rather it says that he is telling us exactly how the mind must come to function in order to have the mystical experience: that is, unaware of all things, having forgotten all of one's habitual cognitive structures.

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NOTES

1. A draft of this paper was read at the American Academy of Religion's national convention, November 1985.

2. Rufus Jones was one of the earliest to do so. More recently see Richard H. Jones, "Experience and Conceptualization in Mystical Knowledge," *Zygon*, 18, No. 2 (June 1983), pp. 139-165; William Wainwright, *Mysticism*, (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1981); Jerry Gill, "Mysticism and Mediation," *Faith and Philosophy* 1, No. 1 (1984), pp. 111-121; etc. See also the two Katz volumes, cited below.

3. Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism," in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). Hereafter abbreviated as Katz, 1978. See also *Mysticism and Religious Traditions*, ed. Steven T. Katz, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). Hereafter abbreviated as Katz, 1983.

4. Ninian Smart, "Interpretation and Mystical Experience," *Religious Studies*, 1, No. 1 (1965), p. 75.

5. Cf. Smart, p. 75-76.

6. See Roland Fischer, "A Cartography of the Ecstatic and Meditative States," *Science* 174 (1971), pp. 897-904. I am grateful to Diane Jonte-Pace for this reference. While a forgetting of all conceptual structures, I shall argue, causes pure consciousness and advances on it like the unitive experience, something like a remembering and an interposing seems to be causing visions and auditions. There may be similar requirements for both—e.g., deautomatization—but the processes may differ.

7. Heinz Hartmann, *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation*, (New York: International University Press, 1958), p. 88.

8. His emphasis on the shaping role played by expectations is based on this notion.

9. Katz, 1978, p. 30.

10. In his paper delivered to the American Academy of Religion, 1985, Anthony Perovich distinguished between experiences in which concepts provide form or content. This is an example in which concepts provide *content*, here Gothic.

11. E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 73.

12. For another example, see J. S. Bruner and Leo Postman, "On the Perception of Incongruity: A Paradigm," *Journal of Personality*, 18 (1949), pp. 206-23.

13. "Models . . . contribute heavily to the creation—I repeat to the *creation* of experience." Steven Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience," in Katz, 1983, p. 51. See also Gimello, "Mysticism in Its Contexts," in Katz, 1983, p. 85.

14. He suggests at various points that memory, apprehension, expectation, symbols, concepts,

patterns, etc., play this shaping role and that the constructivist activity is one of shaping, coloring, differentiating, integrating, and "relating the present experience to past and future experiences." As Bernhardt remarked in his paper, "Is Pure Consciousness Mediated?", delivered at the American Academy of Religion, 1985, p. 45, "one wonders how all of these elements and processes fit together, if they do."

15. Katz, 1978, p. 46.

16. Norman Prigge and Gary Kessler, "Is Mystical Experience Everywhere the Same?" *Sophia* 21 (April) 1982.

17. Katz, 1978, p. 57.

18. Bernhardt, p. 47.

19. Anthony Perovich, Jr., "Mysticism and the Philosophy of Science," *Journal of Religion*, 65, No. 1, (January 1983), pp. 63-82.

20. Katz, 1983, p. 51.

21. Wainwright, *Op. Cit.*, p. 21.

22. We may count this as a visionary, not a mystical experience.

23. Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness* (New York: Causeway Books, 1974), p. 8. This is a reprint of the 1900 edition. Bucke describes himself as a student of poetry and of "speculative books" (such as Darwin), but mentions no specifically religious background. Bernadette Roberts, *The Experience of No Self* (Boulder: Shambhala Publications, 1984), p. 9. She says that her contemplative experiences began "at an early age," before her indoctrination into the Christian contemplative tradition. When her specifically mystical experiences commenced, she was "surprised and bewildered" by them. "I was left without a way to account for this experience. . . . Clearly, I had fallen outside my own, as well as the traditional, frame of reference when I came upon a path that seemed to begin where the writers on the contemplative life had left off." (p. 10) In fact, it was just the lack of relevant models, she notes, which led her to write her account (pp. 13-14).

24. Interview, November 1985, with DA.

25. This was suggested to me in a private conversation with Wayne Proudfoot, 1983.

26. St. Teresa of Avila, *The Life of St. Teresa* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1944), p. 210.

27. Interview, MM, August 1985.

28. The female I interviewed told me she was unacquainted with the so-called *chakra's* at the time of her transformation.

29. Although this is with reference to a vision, Francis of Assisi's response is common: he "wondered exceedingly at the sight of so unfathomable a vision," according to Bonaventure.

30. *Meister Eckhart: Sermons and Tractates, Volume* I, Trans. M. O'C Walshe, (London: Watkins, 1979), p. 7.

31. *Eckhart*, pp. 20-21.

32. Edward Conze, ed. *Buddhist Scriptures*, (Baltimore: Penguin, 1959), p. 139.

33. Certainly it will be granted that there is some once-known fact which plays no significant role in his experience, and that if it plays no role in his experience it is (temporarily) forgotten.

34. Gombrich describes just this process of schema trial and correction which one might adopt when trying to copy what is called a nonsense figure, say an inkblot or an irregular patch:

> By and large, it appears, the procedure is always the same. The draftsman tries first to classify

the blot and fit it into some sort of familiar schema—he will say, for instance, that it is triangular or that it looks like a fish. Having selected such a schema to fit the form approximately, he will proceed to adjust it, noticing for instance that the triangle is rounded at the top, or that the fish ends in a pigtail. Copying, we learn from these experiments, proceeds through the rhythms of schema and correction. The schema is not the product of a process of abstraction, of a tendency to simplify; it represents the first approximate, loose category which is gradually tightened to fit the forms it is to reproduce.

(E. H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Representation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 73-74.

35. Ornstein and Naranjo, *On the Psychology of Meditation*, (London: Penguin, 1977), p. 166. It is interesting that alpha EEG waves, one common mark of meditative states, is found during this experience, indicating a functional similarity between these two phenomena.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 161. The notable exception in this regard is Transcendental Meditation, which makes a point of not being a technique of concentration or eliminating all other objects of attention. However a mantra is used, and the ultimate effect of its use seems to be the elimination of all conscious objects.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 191.

38. Merton Gill and Margaret Brenman, *Hypnosis and Related States: Psychoanalytic Studies in Regression* (New York: International Universities Press, 1961), p. 178.

39. Arthur Diekman, "Deautomatization and the Mystic Experience," *Psychiatry* 29 (1966), pp. 324-338. This article was reprinted in Charles Tart ed., *Altered States of Consciousness* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1969), pp. 23-44. All page references will be to this version. Cf., p. 34.

40. Ornstein and Naranjo.

41. As a yogi quoted by Chaudhuri put it, it is a seeing "the nature of the mind which creates the world as you see it." Haridas Chaudhuri, *The Philosophy of Meditation* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1965).

42. ". . .a man should be so acquitted and free that he neither knows nor realizes that God is at work in him. . ." *Meister Eckhart: Sermons and Tractates, Volume* II, Trans. M. O'C Walshe, (London: Watkins, 1981), pp. 272-73.

43. When Yasutani Roshi writes: "one who becomes attached to what he realizes through satori is still lingering in the world of *makyo* (diabolical phenomena)," he is stating a similar point. Translation by Philip Kapleau, *The Three Pillars of Zen* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), p. 38.

44. Perovich notes the connection between content and conditioning in his "Mysticism and Mediation: A Response to Gill," *Faith and Philosophy* 2, no. 2, (April 1985), pp. 70-88.