

# Meditation and Perception

## SOME NOTES ON THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS MYSTICISM

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In the middle of the twenties two remarkable works on the psychology of religious mysticism were published. *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* by James H. Leuba, 1925, and *Mystikens Psykologi* by Tor Andræ, 1926. Both books contain quotations from Saint Teresa of Avila. In Andræ's book there are also texts from Saint John of the Cross. Leuba has neglected this saint and doctor ecclesiae. It seems as if Tor Andræ thought that there are no differences between the religious experience of Saint Teresa and that of Saint John of the Cross. Differences there are, however, and of such a kind that neglecting them means that the heart of the matter has been missed.<sup>1</sup>

Both authors deal at length with hysteria which they regard as an important, perhaps the most important, key to the secret of mystic life. In the analytical index to Leuba's book the words *meditation* and *perception* are conspicuous by their absence, but Leuba has a chapter on the methods of Christian mystics and here one kind of meditation is mentioned: "She (Saint Teresa) may think of Jesus Christ as present to the senses, seek to fan her love for him into a bright flame, to keep in his company, speak to him, implore him, complain to him, and rejoice with him."<sup>2</sup> The results of such meditation do not interest Leuba as much as the following phases in an ascending series of mystical states which he considers more compatible with the phenomena of hypnotism.

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<sup>1</sup> It is rather strange that in, *La Mystique et les mystiques*, éd. J. A Ravier, Paris 1965, nothing is to be found about the Spanish mystics of the 16th century. Other strange omissions are observed by the reviewer in *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, 40<sup>e</sup> Année No. 2, 1966.

<sup>2</sup> Leuba, pp. 163 f.

In Tor Andræ's book the meditative technique of Pantanjali and the prescriptions for meditation given by Rudolph Steiner are discussed but no systematic approach to the meditative techniques of Christian mystics is to be found.

Instead of asking what kind of spiritual training or meditative methods Saint Teresa practised and what the results of such exercises would be, Andræ tries to convince us that her hysterical constitution must have been the most important precondition for her mystical experiences.<sup>1</sup> His book is a most instructive specimen of the psychology that Georges Politzer once described and criticized.<sup>2</sup>

Andræ has clearly stated that he deals only with the phenomena of possession and inspiration and that he does not think the nature of ecstasy has been fully understood. It requires, he tells us in the concluding lines of his book, much additional research and discussion. It is a curious fact, however, that when dealing with the problems of inspiration in a book on religious mysticism he has nothing to say about the poems of Saint John of the Cross that are held to be "avec deux ou trois sonnets de Gongora, ce que la poésie espagnole a jamais produit de plus étrange et de plus sublime".<sup>3</sup>

Neither Leuba nor Andræ found it necessary to mention the cosmic vision of Saint John of the Cross, which against the background of "the affective mysticism in western civilization"<sup>4</sup> stands out as a most remarkable fact in the mystic experience of Christians. A "psychology of mysticism" which omits the striking experience of Saint John of the Cross is likely to give us a false opinion of the conditions both of mysticism and of religious life in general. As far as I can see, the study of mysticism must be carried on with more attention paid to the meditative techniques used by mystics and to *the problems of perception*.

In this paper I will first present some remarks on the difference between Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross, then I will mention some recent studies of meditation and in the third part of my paper I will tackle some problems of perception.

<sup>1</sup> Andræ, p. 567; cf. Sundén, *Die Religion und die Rollen*, Berlin 1966, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Critique des fondements de la psychologie*, Paris 1928.

<sup>3</sup> Jean Casson, in *Mercur de France* 1925, p. 556.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Herbert Moller, "Affective Mysticism in Western Civilization", *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Summer 1965.

## I

In Jean Baruzi's important work on Saint John of the Cross we find the following statement: "— — — entre sainte Thérèse et saint Jean de la Croix on découvre exactement l'opposition que l'on retrouverait entre un mysticisme qui se fonde, dès l'origine sur le total rejet des appréhensions distinctes, et un mysticisme qui si affranchi qu'il soit des états distincts, s'édifie à travers le troublant cortège des visions, des révélations et des paroles".<sup>1</sup>

Accounts of mystic experience can, according to Arthur J. Deikman, be categorized as (1) untrained-sensate, (2) trained-sensate, and (3) trained-transcendent.

"Untrained-sensate" refers to phenomena occurring in persons not regularly engaged in meditation, prayer, or other exercises aimed at achieving a religious experience. These persons come from all occupations and classes. The mystic state they report is one of intense affective, perceptual, and cognitive phenomena that appear to be extensions of familiar psychological processes. Nature and drugs are the most frequent precipitating factors.

The recent accounts of experiences with LSD-25 fall into the same group.

The "trained-sensate" category refers to essentially the same phenomena occurring in religious persons in the West and in the East who have deliberately sought "grace", "enlightenment" or "union" by means of long practice in concentration and renunciation (contemplative meditation, Yoga, and so forth).

The untrained-sensate and the trained-sensate states are phenomenologically indistinguishable, with the qualification that the trained mystics report experiences conforming more closely to the specific religious tradition in which they participate.

To the trained-transcendent group belong descriptions of a state, occurring almost always in association with long training, where multiplicity disappears and a sense of union with the One and the All appears.<sup>2</sup>

According to Baruzi (loc.cit.), Saint Teresa's experience ought to be placed in the trained-sensate-group and the experience of Saint John in the

<sup>1</sup> Jean Baruzi, *Saint Jean de la Croix et le problème de l'expérience mystique*, 2 éd., 1931, p. 158, Liv. IV chap. II in toto.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur J. Deikman, "De-automatization and the Mystic Experience", *Psychiatry*, No. 4, 1966, pp. 324 f.

trained-transcendent. But we must remember that even Saint Teresa knows of “une expérience par delà l’extase même”, different however from that of Saint John of the Cross.<sup>1</sup>

Saint John of the Cross was familiar with the technique resulting in “visions et paroles” but he rejected it and would not himself accept “visions et paroles” as divine communications.<sup>2</sup> *The Consummation* of the gospel had convinced him that Christ was the total revelation of God and that there was nothing more to be revealed.<sup>3</sup> R. J. Werblowsky has been struck by the saint’s negation of outwardly noticeable and inner subjective experiences<sup>4</sup>, but curiously enough he has not mentioned that Saint John of the Cross knows of a new kind of perception<sup>5</sup> which offers itself to the soul when it has been united with God.

This perception is not devoid of special content.<sup>6</sup> When the soul is united with God it senses that all things are God in one single being, “siente ser todas las cosas Dios en un simple ser”<sup>7</sup> the saint tells us in his commentary on two of the verses of the *Cantico*. The meaning of this is absolutely clear for he adds: “Y ansi no se ha de entender, que en lo aqui se dice que siente el alma, es como ver las cosas en la luz, ó las criaturas en Dios, sino que en aquella posesion siente serle todas las cosas Dios.”<sup>8</sup> “Dieu ne m’est donné au delà des choses. Dieu et les choses me sont donnés simultanément, en une synthèse dont Jean de la Croix n’explicite pas toute l’audace mais qui aboutit à voir en Dieu l’univers et en l’univers Dieu.”<sup>9</sup> Baruzi states very clearly that contemplation such as Saint John of the Cross understands creates a mystic perception of the universe as a whole, but he has no explanation to give of

<sup>1</sup> Baruzi, p. 626.

<sup>2</sup> Seen in the perspective of role-psychology the “visions and paroles” of Saint Teresa do not appear as a “troublant cortège”. Cf. Sundén, *Die Religion*, p. 72, and Sundén, “What is the next step to be taken in the study of religious life?”, *The Harvard Theological Review*, 58, 1965, pp. 446–447. Cf. Baruzi, p. 467 note 4.

<sup>3</sup> Baruzi, pp. 512 f., Sundén, “Nathan Söderblom och mystiken”, *Kristen Humanism. Årsbok*, 1966, pp. 91 f.

<sup>4</sup> R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, “On the Mystical Rejection of Mystical Illuminations”, *Religious Studies*, Vol. 1, April 1966, p. 184.

<sup>5</sup> Baruzi, p. 520 note 2 and pp. 617 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Baruzi, p. 584.

<sup>7</sup> Baruzi, pp. 642 f.

<sup>8</sup> Baruzi, p. 643.

<sup>9</sup> Baruzi, p. 645.

the fact that the unified universe is perceived by the saint as a personal God, that the saint can tell us that the soul is granted the privilege of seeing God himself "con su rostro lleno de gracias de todas las criaturas".<sup>1</sup> This kind of perception is, I think, the most interesting phenomenon in Christian "mysticism" and perhaps a key to the nature of religious experience in general which is a *perceptual* phenomenon.

Let us now mention some recent studies on meditation.

## 2

When I read Leuba's book in the twenties I did not really understand what he meant when in the concluding section he recommended pious people to accept "physical and psychological means and methods" for the improvement of spiritual life. Reading those recommendations in the sixties a host of vivid associations immediately appeared to me. I remembered for instance what Paul Zacharias had written about the method of J. H. Schultz, "das autogene Training," and its importance for spiritual life: "Ein näheres Vergleich der hesychastischen Technik mit autogenen Training zeigt nicht nur überraschende Übereinstimmungen, sondern vermag auch einen Weg zu weisen, wie dem abendländischen Christen von heute die Schätze altkirchlicher Mystik wieder zugänglich gemacht werden können".<sup>2</sup> In the light of autogene training the hesychastic prayer becomes "in seine physiologischen Baubestandteile zerlegt und in eine durchsichtige Reihe aktiver Übungen verwandelt."<sup>3</sup>

These quotations show that Schultz's method must be of great interest for the psychology of mysticism.

Schultz's method<sup>4</sup> creates a sort of concentrated selfrelaxation which under the guidance of a specialist leads the trainee step by step from a general bodily relaxation (Unterstufe) to more advanced stages where sym-

<sup>1</sup> *Obras del místico Doctor San Juan de la Cruz. Edición crítica* (y la más correcta y completa de las publicadas hasta hoy con introducciones y notas del Padre Gerardo de San Juan de la Cruz, Carmelito Desalgo), II, Toledo 1912, p. 480.

<sup>2</sup> Paulus Zacharias, "Gebet und Entspannung. Hesychastische Mystik und Autogene Training", *Der Weg zur Seele*, 1, 1952, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Das Autogene Training*, 1932, (9:th edition, Stuttgart 1956) and *Übungsheft für das Autogene Training*, 8:th edition, Stuttgart 1953.

bolic phantasies are skilfully induced. The trainee endeavours to experience a symbolic representation of ideas, of his own feelings, of persons, and finally of moral questions in a way which allows him to make his unconscious tendencies symbolically visible.<sup>1</sup> Schultz himself has not connected the method with religion, its object according to him is "self-realization, psychic freedom, harmony and a lively creativity". A consequence of this religious neutrality is that the method has been appreciated and used among Christians as well as among Buddhists.

As we can see from *Autogene Training—Correlationes Psychosomaticae*, a volume edited by Wolfgang Luthe in 1965, the method has now been applied all over the world. Among 53 authors represented in this volume we find for instance A. Onda who has connected the findings of a medical and psychological study of Zen organized by the Japanese Ministry of Education with autogene training (pp. 251 ff.). Using Schultz's method a number of authors have tried to arrive at a better understanding of other meditative techniques of the East. Among books let me only mention *Arkaische Ekstase und asiatische Meditation* by D. Langen (1963) and among papers *Konzentrierte Selbstentspannung durch Übungen die sich aus der buddhistischen Atemmeditation und aus dem Atemtherapie herleiten* by W. M. Scheffer,<sup>2</sup> because of the bibliographical notes which are to be found in these publications.

William James once could write that to the medical mind, the ecstasies of Saint Teresa, "signify nothing but suggested and imitated hypnotic states on an intellectual basis of superstition, and a corporeal one of the degeneration and hysteria."<sup>3</sup> However the experience and studies of the followers of Schultz have now created a different atmosphere in the study of mysticism in which James's disparaging references to degeneration and hysteria are no longer acceptable. Among Schultz's followers Klaus Thomas<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The problems of "the unconscious" have to be reexamined in the light of recent works on this topic. See Han M. M. Fortmann, *Als Ziende de Onzienlijke. Een cultuurpsychologische studie over de religieuze waarneming en de zogenaamde religieuze projectie*, Bd 2, 1964, pp. 122-150.

<sup>2</sup> *Zeitschrift für Psychotherapie und medizinische Psychologie*, 16, 1966, pp. 173 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *The Varieties of religious Experience*, Thirty-second Impression 1920, pp. 412-413.

<sup>4</sup> "Die Bedeutung der 'hypnotischen und autogenen Bilderschau' für die Religionspsychologie", *Archiv für Religionspsychologie*, Band 9, 1965, pp. 282-297.

has combined his method with the technique invented by R. Desoille<sup>1</sup> in a way that is of special interest for the psychology of mysticism.

Desoille's technique is both diagnostic and therapeutic. The therapeutic principle lies in the acceleration and furthering of effective development. It is a healing process which seeks maximum transcendence of psychic limitations through symbolic ascent and descent. The results obtained by Desoille and Thomas permit a new psychological understanding of the Christian symbols of ascension<sup>2</sup> and certain details in their reports can be very useful for the study of revelations in general. The meditation induced by the combined Schultz-Desoille method allows a transition to religious problems in a completely natural way, although sometimes the therapist working with the method of Schultz may encounter resistance and opposition from religious clients.<sup>3</sup> Another method to be mentioned in this context is the one invented by Carl Happich. His fundamental principles will be found in the writings mentioned below.<sup>4</sup>

If meditative techniques have become of great importance in psychotherapy,<sup>5</sup> the organismic approach of the "mindcurers" and their results will permit us to complete phenomenological descriptions of mystic conscious states<sup>6</sup> with more exact information of their physiological conditions. In this way "mystical experiences" in general can be seen as results of meditative techniques and we need not regard "an hysterical predisposition" of the subject as their necessary condition.

<sup>1</sup> Cf R. Desoille, *Le Rêve Eveillé en Psychothérapie, Essai sur la fonction de régulation de l'inconscient collective*, Paris 1945.

<sup>2</sup> Mentioned by Carl-Martin Edsman. *Le baptême du feu*, Uppsala 1940, pp. 51-52.

<sup>3</sup> Hans Gödan, "Religiöse Interferenzphänomene beim autogene Training, ihre Beurteilung und Vermeidung", *Zeitschrift für Psychotherapie und medizinische Psychologie*, 13, 1963, p. 96.

<sup>4</sup> "Das Bildbewusstsein als Ansatzstelle psychischer Behandlung", *Zentralblatt für Psychotherapie*, Bd. 5, 1932; "Bildbewusstsein und Schöpferische Situation", *Deutsche med. Wochenschrift*, No. 2, 1939; *Anleitung zur Meditation*, 3:e Aufl., Darmstadt 1948.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Wolfgang Kretschmer "Meditative Techniques in Psychotherapy", *Psychologia*, 5, 1962, 76-83. See also Wilhelm Bitter, *Meditation in Religion und Psychotherapie*, Stuttgart 1957 (=Kindler 2025/26) and *Psychotherapie und religiöse Erfahrung*, Stuttgart 1965.

<sup>6</sup> Karl Albrecht, *Das mystische Erkennen. Gnoseologie und philosophische Relevanz der mystischen Relation*, Bremen 1958; *Psychologie des mystischen Bewusstseins*, Bremen 1951 (Bremer Beiträge zur Kultur und Wirtschaft).

From Baruzi's comparative studies on the writings of Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross we can conclude that Saint John practised a method of contemplation unknown to Saint Teresa and that he has rejected the practice recommended to her by some Jesuit fathers. If by a meditative practice such as that of Saint Teresa a certain perceptive system can be built up<sup>1</sup> it seems as if Saint John tried to undo all the dispositions organized in his organism during his own earlier meditative life and as if he had found a possibility to undo even the systems and functions that normally attach a human being to his environment.

If the studies mentioned in the foregoing pages permit us to follow the visionary life of Saint Teresa in a context of physiological Umschaltungen, autosuggestion and hypnotism, three studies on meditation published by Arthur J. Deikman<sup>2</sup> will be of more interest for the study of the mystic contemplation of Saint John of the Cross.

Deikman has conducted two series of experiments on meditation. In the first series 12 meditative sessions were conducted over a period of three weeks. I will recapitulate here only some features of the procedure omitting details, for example a taperecorder producing disturbing sounds.

The subject, who sat in a comfortable armchair with his eyes approximately eight feet from the object of meditation, a blue vase ten inches high, which stood on a single brown end table against the opposite wall, was instructed to concentrate on the blue vase. "By concentration", the experimenter told him, "I do not mean analysing the different parts of the vase, or thinking a series of thoughts about the vase, but rather, trying to see the vase as it exists in itself, without any connections with other things. Exclude all other thoughts or feelings or sounds or body sensations. Do not let them distract you but keep them out so that you can concentrate all your attention, all your awareness on the vase itself. Let the perception of the vase fill your entire mind."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sundén, *Die Religion und die Rollen*, p. 73; cf. p. 56 note 155 and p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur J. Deikman, "Experimental Meditation", *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, Vol. 136, 1963, pp. 329-343; "Implications of experimentally induced contemplative meditation", *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, Vol. 142, 1966, pp. 101-116, "De-automatization and the mystical experience", *Psychiatry*, 1966, pp. 324-338.

<sup>3</sup> Deikman, 1963, p. 330.



The second series was conducted to obtain information on the effect of perceptual concentration over a longer period of time. In this, one of the subjects of the first experiment continued for a total of 78 sessions and another subject completed 106 sessions. By these experiments Deikman tried to test three general hypotheses to which he had been led by a selective review of mystic literature:

“(1) that the procedure of contemplative meditation is a principal agent in producing the mystic experience;

(2) that training in contemplative meditation leads to the building of intrapsychic barriers against distracting stimuli;

(3) that many of the phenomena described in mystic accounts can be regarded as the consequence of partial de-automatization of the psychic structures that organize and interpret perceptual stimuli.”<sup>1</sup>

In this paper I cannot discuss the procedure employed by Deikman and the experiences of his subjects. I must concentrate on what he has to say about the pragmatic system of automatic selection and cognitive structure on which normal perception depends and the possibility of undoing such systems.

### 3

As we mature, a learning process is going on in which stimuli and percepts are organized towards a high level of differentiation based on formal characteristics. This learning process not only takes place at the expense of vividness and variability but possibly involves a loss of special perceptual functions other than those to which we are accustomed.<sup>2</sup> We can also say that our passage from infancy to adulthood is accompanied by an organization of the perceptual and cognitive world that has as its price the selection of some stimuli to the exclusion of others. If this is the case, it is quite possible that a technique could be found to reverse or undo temporarily the automatization that has restricted our communication with reality to the active perception of only segments of it. This undoing may be called a process of de-automatization, which if successful might be followed by awareness of aspects of reality formerly unavailable to us. In this way I think that the

<sup>1</sup> Deikman, 1963, p. 329.

<sup>2</sup> Deikman, 1966 a, p. 113; 1966 b, p. 329.

main lines of Deikman's reasoning can be summed up. The normal organization of perception being an act of automatization is an idea that Deikman has taken over from Heinz Hartmann<sup>1</sup>, and the notion of de-automatization he has borrowed from Marton M. Gill and Margaret Brenman.<sup>2</sup>

That the method of Saint John of the Cross means the undoing of normal perception and cognition is quite clear from the penetrating analysis of his writings by Jean Baruzi. That this undoing was followed by an entirely new kind of perception is also a fact, but can we really find texts permitting us to prove that Deikman's de-automatization hypothesis is applicable to the method used by Saint John of the Cross to achieve this new perception? Undoubtedly he has told us that "le divin s'insinue naturellement, et non pas seulement par voie surnaturelle en une âme purifiée",<sup>3</sup> a statement favourable to the Deikman hypothesis. But what the process of purification meant to Saint John of the Cross was highly determined by his theological upbringing and by the conception of the soul he had inherited from the tradition of medieval schoolmen.

A Buddhist, the Zenmaster Dogen, expressly states that the senses of sight and audition are necessary for enlightenment. "Verlossing kan slechts bereikt worden door 'de geest los te laten', m.a.w. door niet naar een intellectueel begrip van de Waarheid te streven. De zintuigen van het gezicht en het gehoor, die typisch lichamelijk zijn, zijn onmisbaar voor de verlichting van de geest en het begrip van de waarheid. Het vatten der Waarheid, het bereiken van de Weg is een lichamelijke prestatie, waarvoor volgens Dogen het zazen (het zitten in meditatie) onmisbaar is."<sup>4</sup>

A Christian cannot in the same way let the senses take part in an experience of God. The new experience of the Universe/God must to him be an experience of the spirit. The question is then in how far "spirit" can be thought to signify a de-automatized perceptual system? I think the following quotation from Baruzi suggests that this is in fact the case. "La contemplation mystique", writes Baruzi, "nous conduit à adhérer, selon l'esprit, à l'univers.

<sup>1</sup> Heinz Hartmann, *Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaption*, New York 1958, pp. 88-91.

<sup>2</sup> Martin M. Gill and Margaret Brenman, *Hypnosis and related states. Psychoanalytic Studies in Regression*, New York 1959.

<sup>3</sup> Baruzi, p. 488.

<sup>4</sup> F. Vos and E. Zürcher, *Spel Zondern Snaren*, Deventer 1964, p. 111.

Les choses prendront tout à coup une beauté que nous ignorions. Nous les aimerons en elles-mêmes, dans la substance qui les anime, non dans l'accident que nos sens nous transmettent. Peu importe que ce dédain des données sensibles nous semble contestable. La contemplation, telle que l'entend Jean de la Croix, engendre une perception mystique. Et l'univers, par elle, devient un tout qui s'unifie."<sup>1</sup>

If the world of perception automatized by needs and passions and by the training the saint had received as a beginner in the spiritual life was the world he disdained, the mystic perception of which Baruzi speaks could be thought of as "de-automatized perception". The unified universe of this perception is to Saint John of the Cross at the same time God by Whom he feels penetrated.

Deikman's subjects reported an experience that "everything was sort of merging".<sup>2</sup> This experience indicates I think a possibility to get part of an answer to the question Baruzi has put in this way: "Jean de la Croix qui s'est détaché de tout sentiment de présence, qui a refoulé toute appréhension distincte adhère maintenant à Dieu dont il s'estime pénétré. D'où vient qu'après avoir été si circonspect, il n'hésite pas à se dire imprégné de Dieu?"<sup>3</sup> The answer must be that this conviction was founded on experience and probably on an experience of "merging" of the same kind as Deikman's subjects reported, but there are other features in the descriptions of the saint, not explicable in this way and too complicated to be handled in a short paper.

According to Deikman the classical mystic literature is of less help if we search for evidence of changes in the mystic's experience of the external world because the mystic's orientation "is inward rather than outward" and because "he tends to write about God rather than nature".<sup>4</sup> In the case of Saint John of the Cross the "inward" does not exclude the "outward"; Saint John of the Cross has not only: "chanté et analysé la rencontre de Dieu et de l'Âme seuls. Ce sont les choses elles-mêmes, d'abord rejetées par

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<sup>1</sup> Baruzi, p. 584.

<sup>2</sup> Deikman, 1966 b, p. 531.

<sup>3</sup> Baruzi, p. 645.

<sup>4</sup> Deikman 1966 b, p. 330.

la négation de la nuit, qui se réabsorbe dans l'âme, sont découvertes en Dieu et sont aimées passionnément en leur grandeur."<sup>1</sup>

Stimulation never does impinge on a passive organism. For as Dember writes: "Rather the individual is differently prepared, or set, for different inputs. The resulting perception derives from the interaction between set and stimulation. Set may be thought of as a type of context provided by cognitive conditions rather than simple stimulus conditions. Or from another point of view, set can be considered as analogous to the instructions that determine the manner in which a computer handles its input."<sup>2</sup>

We cannot escape the problem of "set" in the case of Saint John. For if perceptual expansion is made possible by de-automatization of the selective gating and filtering processes that normally are in constant operation and if this expansion means an experience of unity, we must ask why this unity was experienced by Saint John of the Cross as God, and as a personal God? Instead of the *Urgrund* of which Leuba speaks,<sup>3</sup> this God was the Friend spoken of in the following verses!

Mi Amado las montañas  
Los valles solitarios nemorosos  
Las ínsulas extrañas  
Los rios sonorosos  
El silbo de los aires amorosos

La noche sosegada  
En par de los levantes de la aurora  
La música callada  
La soledad sonora  
La cena, que recrea y enamora<sup>4</sup>.

It is important to stress that it was a very special kind of imitatio Christi<sup>5</sup> that led Saint John of the Cross to this experience of all things as God "en un simple ser". The fact that he knew the Bible by heart is also significant.

The metaphysical notion of soul and such reasonings as Leuba's on the

<sup>1</sup> Baruzi, p. 685.

<sup>2</sup> William N. Dember, *The Psychology of Perception*, New York 1965, p. 303; John von Neumann, *The Computer and the Brain*, New Haven 1958.

<sup>3</sup> Leuba, p. 316. Comp. R. C. Zaehner, *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, London 1960, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Cantico*, V:s XIII and XIV.

<sup>5</sup> Baruzi, pp. 547-548.

*Urgrund* have prevented scholars from realizing what the knowledge of the Bible can mean not only for the mystic's description of his experience but for its perceptual organization. To realize what this means the notion of de-automatization must be completed with that of "set", but let us not forget that the problems of "set" are very complicated ones.<sup>1</sup>

In my book *Die Religion und die Rollen* I have given some examples of what it means for a person and especially for his perceptual field to be "set" by a Bible-passage. I tried in that book to give a preliminary explanation of the cosmic vision of Saint John of the Cross and of his theopathic life.<sup>2</sup> I hope to be able some day to present my thought on that matter in a more elaborate way, drawing more from the accumulated evidence we have of the nature of the central nervous system.

To conclude: The problems of perception and mystical experience must be discussed on a broader basis than that Deikman himself has chosen, but let me add that his papers contain many interesting hypotheses and remarks that I have not mentioned here. Compared with older works I think that his approach means an important step forward in the study of the psychology of religious mysticism.

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<sup>1</sup> James J. Gibson, "A critical Review of the concept of Set in contemporary experimental Psychology", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 38, 1941, pp. 781-817.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Religion und die Rollen*, Berlin 1966, pp. 171-179.