
MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE AS
AN EMPIRICAL FACT.
PERCEPTION, MEANING, INSIGHT

LOUW FEENSTRA
NICO TYDEMAN

ABSTRACT. This review is one step farther into our reflections on the fringes of epistemology. We started by analyzing the peculiarities of the senses and then moved into the conflicting worldviews of science and religion¹. In this review we try to bring some structure into the many views, contradictions and similarities about mysticism across cultures, which we—from the very start—take as special kind of perception.

KEY WORDS. Illumination, meditation, mysticism, perception, religion.

In most circles where it is fashionable to be rational, it is not fashionable to be mystical; and in most circles where it is fashionable to be mystical, it is not fashionable to be rational².

F. Staal, *Exploring Mysticism*.

INTRODUCTION

An earlier paper described mysticism as ‘the basic experience of any religion’, and, possibly ‘an accidental by-product of evolution¹’. Perception may be understood as the result of perceiving, as a mental image, as a concept or percept³. In biomedicine perception is generally understood as the total of all processes leading to the assimilation of physical and chemical stimuli from the external world⁴. In the humanities perception may also be understood as an intuitive discernment or insight, an ability to understand. This latter understanding of perception seems to border on inner or spiritual vision and contemplation.

This paper deals with the ‘humanities version’ of perception, which according to Wittgenstein is ‘the inexpressible⁵.’

Meditation, contemplation and mystic insight or enlightenment may be understood as (a variation of) perception as Aurelius Augustinus knew. It is a kind of perception that leads to a special kind of experience, one that

Department of Neuroscience, Erasmus University Medical Center, ‘s-Gravendijkwal 230, 3015 CE Rotterdam, The Netherlands. / L.Feenstra@erasmusmc.nl
Zen Centrum Amsterdam, Binnenkant 39, 1011 BM Amsterdam, The Netherlands. / Tydeman@scarlet.nl

is significant for the perceiver but impossible—or very hard—to be vindicated by others. An overview of mysticism will be given.

MYSTICISM⁶

The quantity of literature on mysticism is vast. A recently released encyclopedia of mysticism written in Dutch took ten years, thirty-four collaborators and 1 149 pages to bring together⁷.

It follows as a matter of course that a review is only possible in outline. Although we will try to present the information in a systematic way it should be kept in mind that mysticism usually ignores the rules of any taxonomy. Our arbitrary attempt will be no exception and is to be understood as no more than casting a net in order to come to grips with the subject.

SOURCES

The most obvious way to study mysticism seriously is not merely indirectly and from without, but also directly and from within, comparable to perception. While the knowledge of perception is taken for granted, for mysticism we have no storehouse of knowledge to draw upon personally. Staal continues (t)his statement by comparing the indirect way of a blind man studying vision⁸. He adds:

that mysticism is not (often) studied directly and from within (1) because it is not so simple, (2) because of the general prejudice that mysticism by its very nature is mysterious and cannot be studied, (3) because of the general mistrust on the part of many contemporary philosophers and psychologists, and behavioral scientists generally, of anything that is not either an aspect of behavior or a fact of physiology, (4) because of particular beliefs concerning mysticism⁹ (Staal, p. 1269).

The indirect way must rely on accounts, orally or written, that are always *about* the mystic's experience. These may take a variety of forms: a first-person report, the mystic's interpretation at a later stage, the interpretation of third persons within the same religious tradition, the similar experience in other traditions¹⁰. The literary genres that mystical writings tend to take are aphorism, biography and hagiography, report on visions, commentary, dialogue, various forms of instruction (sermon, private counseling, theoretical and practical teaching), prayer, religious poetry and fiction¹¹. Even more important for handing down the tradition—as all mystical traditions acknowledge—is the living teacher, who is usually known with the originally Sanskrit term *guru*. Gurus derive their position from the state of their own mystical experiences. Eastern religions tend to call these individuals 'enlightened.'

LANGUAGE

Someone who has had a mystical experience usually voices this event 'automatically' in his or her frame of reference, to be taken as the terminology of his religious upbringing. Every mystical text should thus always be interpreted in the context of the relevant religious tradition—including any specific subgroup *and* the historical time—in which it was written, be it atheistic, monotheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic or animistic. One should be aware of the constant change in meaning of the terms used over time.

As there is a close relationship between the language and thought habits of the mystic, and the contents of the visions he may have had, Christians tend to see Christian symbols and Buddhists Buddhist ones¹². Katz upholds the even more extreme position that the mystic's experience is *shaped by* the religious tradition in he was brought up¹³.

Mystical texts have a peculiar quality. Mystical experiences cannot be couched in plain language¹⁴. Typically, mystical texts make use of a number of figures of speech such as metaphors, images, emblems, symbols, over-excited expressions, hyperboles, contrasts and contradictions, denials and paradoxes, seemingly illogical comparisons, 'enrichment' with neologisms, et cetera. Grasping (the 'reality' of) mystical experiences with words remains a chimera. One of the Zen metaphors for this illusion is 'pointing to the moon;' it will never be the moon itself. Often mystical language seems to have a florid, poetical, in Christianity frequently (homo)erotic—occasionally in our opinion quite baroque—quality¹⁵. The reader must find his way back to the source of the thoughts of the mystic, his mystical intuition. *Listening* to a speaking mystic with all the nuances of his voice may easily lead to real apprehension ('*sermo mysticus*').

There is still another reason why the language is often hardly comprehensible: Mystics of the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) became entangled in self-contradictions as they twisted their statements in order to make them acceptable to the orthodox variety of their religious brand.

EXPERIENCE

After studying many historical and contemporary accounts of mystical experiences, William James characterizes the mystical experience by four conditions which may justify in calling an experience mystical: (1) *ineffability*, i.e., no adequate report of its content can be given in words. Its quality must be directly experienced and cannot be imparted or transferred to others. Mystical states are more like states of feeling than of intelligence; (2) *noetical* quality, being to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge, of insight. The following are less sharply demarcated, but are usually found; (3) *transiency*, i.e., cannot be sustained for long; half an hour or at most two hours seems to be the limit; (4) *passivity*,

the experiences can be facilitated but once the characteristic sort of consciousness has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will was in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power¹⁶. Bharati describes *his* mystical experience in a way that agrees perfectly with James' description:

For a moment, or for an hour—I no longer know which—I was that which is proclaimed in the four great axioms of Upanishad wisdom: *Aham brahmasmi*—I am the Absolute; *tattvamas*—Thou are that; *prajnatma brahm*—everything that is truly the Brahman. Only now had I become a real apostate, because I had fulfilled the original heresy in me—that mystical pantheism against which early Christianity fought so hard, and with final success. I am God—that is supreme wisdom; I—not the unimportant, physical bodied I, not the wishing I, not the intellectual I—but all one impersonal I which alone exists. I experienced all this in that blessed moment for which I had not directly striven¹⁷.

Some claim differences between the experiences of the monotheistic traditions that hold that the mystic moves through stages leading toward its divine presence *outside* themselves, i.e., transcendent. When such a person has been granted the intuitive apprehension of reality it is considered a divine gift of grace. Buddhist mysticism teaches that the universal principle (Buddha nature) already exists within each person (and everywhere else), i.e., immanent. Some contend that there is a third category, that of the prophetic religions. These practice intense, devotional worship that lends a distinctive, *numinous* (implying the sense of having encountered the sacred presence of divinity) interpretation to the religious experience¹⁸.

SUBSTANCE

Mystics believe they have access to a special form of knowledge described as revelation, insight or intuition. They are convinced that this knowledge is of a different reality, superior to the daily one that strikes them as illusionary. Its 'reality' is a happier one and continuously at hand. They are very sure—skeptics might say cocksure—about their convictions as any direct sensory experiences can be, and—as Russell has it—they accept them as a rule also more convincing than results established by mere logic¹⁹. They just *know*.

A second characteristic of the mystical experience is an overwhelming feeling of unity together with a refusal to accept duality in general. 'Reality is one and indivisible' (Parmenides). Bharati says in this connection:

The one impersonal God presents Himself in many manifestations and many functions. Just as one man plays the role of father to his sons, husband to his wife, friend to his friends, and master to his servants, so God is father to the

one, lord and master to the other, a friend to the third, and on (...) Upanishad declares: there is only one truth, but Wise Man call it by many names ²⁰.

As all is one, the distinction of past and future is an illusion and time is not important. Mystical states tend to be brief and they bring happiness in a way that James calls 'cosmic emotion.' 'Cosmic emotion' inevitably takes in mystics the form of enthusiasm and freedom (those are animally happy, positively refusing to feel unhappiness ²¹).

The Buddhist variety of *prajna* or *insight-wisdom* is described as a leap of intuition that takes place in the presence of full awareness, but in the absence of self and of all other dualities or formal analysis; transmitting its special knowledge wordlessly. This knowledge is more than the German *kennen* and *wissen* or the French *connaître* and *savoir*. It is more like *understanding*, *comprehending*, *knowing in its broadest sense*. It is cognition, thought, affection, cutting through the usual emotions attached to the psychic self. It is quick grasps of unlimited, universal reality, which clarifies the vast unity of all things. The actions coming directly out of *prawn* will be swift, sure, and free from error, especially free from *self-centered* mistakes ²².

Mystics also tend to consider evil as an illusion and some regard both evil and good as illusions. The ethically characteristic of mysticism is absence of indignation or protest, acceptance with joy, disbelief in the ultimate truth of the division into two hostile camps, the good and the bad. This attitude is a direct outcome of the nature of the mystical experience; with its sense of unity is associated a feeling of infinite peace. Indeed it may be suspected that the feeling of peace produces, as feelings do in dreams, the whole system of associated beliefs that make up the body of mystic doctrine ²³. On the other hand Bharati states quite emphatically that it is an error to assume that the mystic should be ethical (...) indeed he states that each is irrelevant for the other ²⁴.

TRAINING

Many techniques have been used and are still in use for preparing the seeker: fasting, prayer, drugs, self-mortification, fornication, yogic procedures, grace, et cetera. Eliade admirably described them extensively in two of his books ²⁵. In fact it seems irrelevant how one comes to such an experience ²⁶. However there are methods for which there exists independent and purely secular justification: (1) fasting (which has very definite effects on the body), (2) 'withdrawal of the senses' (in the *Yogasûtra* called *pratyâhâra*) or sensory deprivation, (3) meditation, (4) breathing exercises (training of the body-mind complex) which are similar to incantation and recitation ²⁷; (5) detachment, which can be induced by recitation

or meditation on a *mantra* ²⁸); (6) sometimes sexual practices (tantrism) which are rejected when they are held to be conducive to an increase in mental tension, but are on the contrary utilized in order to bring about greater detachment from the rules of morality ²⁹.

Many events can and do initiate or 'trigger' the mystical, 'the experience itself cannot be reduced to sexuality or a chemical compound or the notes on the page.' It is also quite irrelevant to mysticism—though of course not to ideological afterthoughts of a theological or anti-theological kind—whether the experiment allocates the zero-splash to 'nature', to himself as now integrated, or to deity however conceived and theologized ³⁰.

Methodical cultivation as an element of religious life may lead—stepwise—to a higher state of contemplation in which—generally—the intellectual, dualistic way of thinking and desire drop off, unity remains and indifference begins. Higher stages reach a region where nothing exists, a next one where there are neither ideas nor absence of ideas, and the next, having reached the end of both idea and perception, he stops finally ³¹.

In Christianity the basis of the (same) system is 'orison' or meditation, the methodical elevation of the soul towards God ³². This may bring the person to a condition called *raptus* or ravishment by theologians, breathing and circulation are so depressed that it is a question among doctors whether the soul be or be not temporarily dis severed from the body. It leads—according Teresa and John of the Cross to enrichment of, and bringing energy to the soul and even to the attainment of absolute truth, usually formulated in negations as it goes above every definable experience and knowledge. "Like Hegel in his logic, mystics journey towards the positive pole of truth only by the '*Methode der Absoluten Negativität*' ³³."

The overcoming of all the usual barriers between the individual and the Absolute is the great mystic achievement. In mystic states (Hinduism, Neoplatonism, Sufism, Christianity, Buddhism) we both become one with the Absolute and we come aware of our oneness ³⁴.

AFTER-EFFECTS

William James writes that the fundamental inner conditions of mystical experiences have characteristic practical consequences which he lists as (1) ascetism (up to pleasure in sacrifice); (2) strength of soul (fears and anxieties go, and blissful equanimity takes their place); (3) purity (cleansing of existence from brutal and sensual elements, contact with such elements are avoided); (4) charity (to all kind of men and even to animals; Francis of Assisi and Ignatius of Loyola ³⁵).

Tenseness, self-responsibility, and worry go; equanimity, receptivity, and peace arrive when simple relaxing and throwing the burden happen. Great emphasis is laid upon the concentration of the consciousness upon

the moment at hand³⁶. There are three minor branches of self-mortification: chastity, obedience (in different ways) and poverty³⁷.

If it does anything directly to the average man with an average mind, it makes him more observant, more detached—it makes him see persons and events around him in a healthier, more humorous hierarchy; they fall in line, beneath the zero-experience, as less important, less pernicious, hence less serious³⁸.

Far-reaching were the consequences that the mystic experience has had on some persons, like for instance Francis of Assisi and Ignatius de Loyola. Some of those had to pay with the loss of their lives. Indeed, each of the three monotheistic religions knows their victims.

SOCIAL STATUS OF MYSTICS

Many mystics are drop-outs; mysticism has an asocial or anti-social outlook. Mystics often express their dislike or contempt of the world of society. In Yoga, the first step on the mystic path is *vairâgya*, 'detachment, renunciation', and this is primarily directed towards our social attachments. Jesus said: 'If any man comes to me and hates not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:26) Tao is noted for its anti-establishment, anarchist, and *laissez faire* attitude³⁹, as is Zen⁴⁰. In Hinduism, where the prevailing ideal results from a synthesis or compromise between the requirements of asceticism and of society, the mystical path of *sañnyâsa* is generally advocated only for those who have gone through the entire gamut of social responsibilities. A person, who in his search for mystical experience turns away from society, cannot be expected to the solution of social problems. However, it does not follow that mysticism does not have social implications, even constructive ones. Later Taoism, for instance, could become an expression of protest, not only for 'escapist intelligentsia,' but also for 'rebellious peasantry'⁴¹.

POINTS OF DEBATE

The fourth edition of the *Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-IV) for the first time inserted an item on 'religious or spiritual problems' under the category V62.89. Earlier, Freud had already judged the 'oceanic experience' of mystics as nothing but a regression to infantile helplessness and primary narcissism. Others called it borderline psychosis, dysfunction of the temporal brain and some even denied the existence of mind and soul all together⁴². In a thoughtful analysis, De Waard diagnoses the formal view of official psychiatry (*Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry*, Thomas Szasz, Ronald D Laing, Jan Foudrayne, et cetera) on

mysticism as old fashioned mysophobia and shivering on the brink⁴³. It shies away from accepting mystical experiences as an empirical fact. However, William James gave short shrift to this kind of what he called 'medical materialism' that classes the apostle Paul's vision on the road to Damascus as a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex, he being an epileptic, snuffs out Teresa of Avila as a hysteric and Francis of Assisi as a hereditary degenerate⁴⁴. He says that in the natural sciences and industrial arts it never occurs to anyone to try to refute opinions by showing up their author's neurotic constitution. "In the end it has to come to our empiricist criterion: By their fruits ye shall know them, not by their roots⁴⁵."

A second point of discussion is the one of the putative similarities or dissimilarities *between mystical experiences between different religious traditions*. Many are of the opinion that all mystical experiences are—basically—the same, and transcend cultural or religious diversity. Others hold that all mystical experiences are the same but the mystics' reports about their experiences are culturally bound. Some consider that all mystical experience can be grouped into 'types' that can cut across cultural boundaries. Though the language is culturally bound, the experiences of mystics are not. Katz argues that he does not believe that such as thing as Huxley's *philosophia perennis* exists^{46,47}. He holds the view

that there are NO pure (i.e. immediate) experiences... All experience is processed through, organized by, and makes itself available to us in extremely complex epistemological ways. The notion of unmediated experience seems, if not self-contradictory, at best empty⁴⁸.

He strongly holds the view that to understand the reports of the mystic after the experiential event, not only the experience itself but as well the form in which it is reported is shaped by concepts which the mystic brings to, and which shape, his experience.

Monotheistic religions seem to strive for the '*unio mystica*' with God and, in Christianity, also with Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost. Bharati presents his view that: "Orthodox Jews, Christians, and Muslims really cannot seek this union and be pious at the same time, because losing one's identity and becoming the cosmic ground is a deadly heresy in these teachings⁴⁹." Those mystics are an embarrassment to the established religious order. If they cannot be suppressed, they will be 'neutralized'. They may be permitted to withdraw to cloistered retreats, there to remain hidden from the eyes of the world, put into jail or even tortured. The more reputed of their number may be sainted—saints to be revered but not imitated⁵⁰.

Indeed, mysticism of monotheistic religions differs from those that strive for negation and vanishing in nirvana. The religious experience of certain strains of Buddhism, Taoism and others are more mystical, while

the prophetic ones (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) are more numinous⁵¹. Like Rudolph Otto, he suggests that a numinous experience is one of an encounter with a being wholly other than oneself and altogether different from anything else. Such an encounter is usually said to be gratuitous, in the sense that those subject to it are not themselves responsible for its occurrence, and it is typically described as both overwhelming and self-authenticating. The mystical experience, by contrast, is not so much an encounter with a 'sacred other' as it is the interior attainment of a certain supernal state of mind. It is held to be the result of the subject's own efforts in following a certain contemplative discipline or method⁵². Indeed, reading the sermons and treatises of Meister Eckhart or the writings of John of the Cross one cannot help the feeling that they also tend to find the Holy in themselves rather than in a divine structure. Both ran into trouble with the Inquisition of their times. Like F. Staal and A. Bharati, we are of the opinion that no godhead is needed to have an illuminative experience.

A third point of debate concerns the numerous parallels and similarities between drugs, drug-induced states and mystical states. There is a great variety of mystical states, a great variety of preparatory exercises between different systems or within the same system, a great variety of drugs with dissimilar effects. Also many states may be induced with the same drug among different people or in the same person at various times⁵³. The religious use of drugs is old and widespread^{54,55}. Institutionalized religions don't like them. They are not so much concerned with religious or mystical experience as with ethics, morality and the continuation of the *status quo*. One of the ways to make ethical actions palatable and even desirable is to show that they are meritorious. The mere ingestion of a drug can hardly be considered meritorious, so how could it lead to such an exalted state? That would seem unfair, to say the least. Hence the moralist's distinction, as in Eliade, between 'easy' and 'difficult' paths⁵⁶. Even if the differences turn out to be fundamental after a thorough and close study, the known similarities are far too profound to be brushed aside⁵⁷.

A fourth debate is one that preoccupies philosophers in their investigations of mysticism, i.e., how to distinguish between mystical experience and the interpretation by the mystic himself, and between others in the same tradition, and yet others from another tradition. Whether or not, or to what extent, mystical experience can be invoked to justify the truth-claims of certain propositions of religious or metaphysical belief; the manifold problem of defining relationships between mystical experience and other areas of human concern such as morality, aesthetics, mental health, and so forth⁵⁸.

To add up, mystical experiences do happen from time immemorial and occur in every culture. They are states of mind achieved commonly

through some form of self-cultivation and are characterized by this salient, but not necessary sole features ⁵⁹:

- a feeling of oneness or unity,
- a strong confidence in the ‘reality’ or ‘objectivity’ of the experience, i.e., a conviction that it is somehow revelatory of ‘the truth,’
- a sense of the final inapplicability of conventional language to the experience,
- a cessation of normal intellectual operations (e.g., deduction, discrimination, ratiocination, speculation, et cetera) or the substitution of them by some ‘higher’ or qualitatively different mode of intellect (e.g., intuition),
- a sense of the coincidence of opposites, of various kinds (paradoxical),
- an extraordinarily strong affective tone, of various kinds (e.g., sublime joy, utter serenity, great fear, incomparable pleasure, often in an unusual combination of these).

According to R. Gimello:

Mysticism and the arts of the spiritually contemplative life have always been comparatively marginal activities in the western traditions, being usually subordinate to prayer, ritual, the sacramental life, worship, moral endeavour, study of the Law. In Eastern religions, Buddhism in the first place, by contrast, meditation has always been one, if not *the* central form of praxis. One should not be surprised, then, if it were found that Buddhism offers a more sophisticated set of analytical instruments with which to examine such phenomena as obtained in disciplines of mental cultivation ⁶⁰.

An interesting development of relatively recent times is *the introduction of modern medico-biological research tools into meditation/illumination* like EEG, PET-scan, fMRI, that demonstrate definitely different images of the meditating brain of a seasoned practitioner—from Roman Catholic nuns to Tibetan monks—to those of laymen. However, these kinds of images demonstrate how meditation affects the body, not the mind.

CONCLUSION

The mystical is thus understood as a special *experience* that cannot be imparted or transferred to others directly. It is rather a state of feeling than intelligence, presenting knowledge, insight, illumination or intuition that is felt to be of a different reality superior to the daily one that strikes the mystic as illusionary. Its ‘reality’ is a happier one, continuously at hand and as sure as any direct sensible experiences can be. A mystic just *knows*. This knowledge, being more than the German *kennen* and *wissen* or the French *connaître* and *savoir*, is more like *understanding*, *comprehending*. It is

cognition, thought and affection, cutting through the usual emotions attached to the psychic self. It is a brief grasp of unlimited, universal reality, which illuminates the vast unity of all things. The actions coming directly out of *prajna* will be swift, sure, and free from error, especially free from *self-centered mistakes*.

The experience takes place in the body, probably in the mind (the view of philosophers and theologians) and/or in the brain (the stance of life scientists). The boundaries with perception, consciousness, memory and cognition seem to be rather faint or partly semantic.

- 1 Feenstra L, Borgstein J. (2003, 2008).
- 2 Staal F. (p. 12).
- 3 In the first line of his book Robinson states that “the majority of modern philosophers—that is, the majority of philosophers writing since the seventeenth century—have believed that in perception one is aware of some item other than the physical object one takes oneself to be perceiving.” (Robinson, 1994, p. 1) Biomedicine holds that it is *not* necessary in perception to be ‘aware’ of some item.
- 4 Assimilation may lead to a variable conscious or unconscious interpretation and integration and reaction of the organism upon it.
- 5 *Es gibt allerdings Unaussprechliches. Dies zeigt sich, es ist das Mystische* (There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical) Wittgenstein, 6.522.
mustikon adjective from the Greek verb *muo* “to close” the eyes or lips.
- 7 Baers, et al, 2003.
- 8 Staal, p. 125.
- 9 Staal, p. 126.
- 10 Katz S. T., p. 23, Language, epistemology, and mysticism. In: Katz, p. 22-74.
- 12 Keller, p. 86.
- 13 Katz p. 26.
- 14 The view that there are realms of reality where ordinary language is not applicable is not, of course, paradoxical, inconsistent or contradictory. Such a situation is quite common not only in philosophy, but also elsewhere, e.g. mathematics or engineering, where for that reason artificial languages are constructed (Staal, p. 53).
- 15 Kripal, 2001.
- 16 James, p. 292-3.
- 17 Bharati, 1980, p.59.
- 18 Austin, p. 15.
- 19 Russell, p. 16.
- 20 Bharati, 1980, p. 38.
- 21 James, p. 77.
- 22 Austin, p. 545-56.
- 23 Russell, p. 17.
- 24 Bharati, 1976, p. 53.
- 25 Eliade, 1964, 1969.
- 26 Bharati, 1976, p. 219.
- 27 Huxley p. 143-5.
- 28 Staal, p. 136-7.
- 29 Staal p. 139.
- 30 Bharati, 1976, p. 51-2.
- 31 James, p. 308.
- 32 James, p. 309-15.
- 33 James, p. 316-9.
- 34 James, p. 321.
- 35 James, p. 215-25.
- 36 James, p. 229.
- 37 James, p. 244-55.
- 38 Bharati, 1976, p. 225.

- 39 Staal, p. 102.
- 40 Verwantschap tussen anarchisme en zen. Feenstra, p. 95-101.
- 41 Staal, p. 103.
- 42 Heery interviews Ellis. <http://www.psychotherapy.net/products/interviews/detail.php?id=253>.
- 43 De Waard, p. 9.
- 44 James, p. 29.
- 45 James, p. 34.
- 46 Katz, p. 23-5.
- 47 *philosophica perennis* coined by Augustinus Steuchius (XVI century theologian and librarian of the Vatican) via Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) chosen by Huxley (1894-1963) as the title of one of his books. It is the philosophy that man can't learn the one divine (spiritual) reality through the intellect but only by direct experience.
- 48 Katz, p. 26.
- 49 Bharati, 1976, p. 28.
- 50 Bharati, 1976, p. 20.
- 51 Gimello R. p. 171, "Mysticism and meditation". In Katz, p. 170-99.
- 52 Gimello, p. 172.
- 53 Staal, p. 148.
- 54 Staal, p. 152.
- 55 Extensive references on psychedelics in Kripal, 2007.
- 56 Staal, p. 156.
- 57 Staal, p. 158.
- 58 Gimello, p. 170-2.
- 59 Gimello, p. 178.
- 60 Gimello, p. 180.

LITERATURE

- Austin J. H. (1999), *Zen and the Brain*. Cambridge: MIT.
- Baers J.; Brinkman G.; Jelsma A.; Steggink O. (2003), *Encyclopedie van de Mystiek, Fundamenten, Tradities, Perspectieven*. Kampen: Uitgeverij Kok.
- Bharati A. (1976), *The Light at the Centre. Context and Pretext of Modern Mysticism*. London: East-West Publ.
- Bharati, A. (1980), *The Ochre Robe*. Santa Barbara: Ross-Erikson.
- American Psychiatric Association (1994), *Diagnostical Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)*.
- Eliade M. (1964), *Shamansim. Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press.
- Eliade M. (1969), *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom*. Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press. 2nd edition.
- Feenstra L. (2005), *Uit Het Academisch Toernooiveld, een Afscheidscollage*. Leuven: Acco.
- Feenstra L.; Borgstein J. (2003), "The senses in perspective," *Ludus Vitalis* 11: 135-57.
- Feenstra L.; Borgstein J. (2008), "Disputes between science and religion," *Ludus Vitalis* 16: 59-72.
- Gimello R. (1978), "Mysticism and meditation," in Katz, *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, pp. 170-99.
- Huxley A. (1944), *Perennial Philosophy*. New York: Harper and Row.
- James W. (1958), *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York: Mentor Book. The New American Library of World Literature.
- Katz S. T. (ed). (1978), *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*. New York: Oxford Univ. Press.
- Kripal J. J. (2001), *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom. Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press.
- Kripal J. J. (2007), *Esalen, America and the Religion of no Religion*. Chicago: Univ. Chicago Press.
- Robinson H. (1994), *Perception*. London: Routledge.
- Russell B. (1918), "Mysticism and logic," in *Mysticism and Logic*. A collection of essays. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, p. 9-37.
- Staal F. (1975), *Exploring Mysticism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Waard F. de (2007), *Spirituele Crises. Transpersoonlijke Psychologie als Perspectief*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Wittgenstein L. (1981), *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.