

THE DIVERSE TYPES OF MYSTICISM

Charles S. Milligan

I. DIVERSITY VS. UNIFORMITY

There is a remark by William James in his celebrated essay on mysticism which is seldom noticed. I must have read a hundred student papers dealing with this essay--it seems like a thousand--and I cannot recall one which mentioned this passage. James wrote, after about thirty-five pages devoted to the basic similarities among diverse mystics in various religious traditions and eras,

But even this presumption from the unanimity of mystics is far from being strong...I am afraid I over-simplified the truth. I did so for expository reasons, and to keep the closer to the classic mystical tradition...It is carved out of a much larger mass; and if we take the larger mass as seriously as religious mysticism has historically taken itself, we find that the supposed unanimity largely disappears. To begin with, even religious mysticism itself, the kind that accumulates traditions and makes schools, is much less unanimous than I have allowed.¹

This retracts very substantially much that James had argued throughout the essay, and it invalidates claims for uniformity among mystics based upon James' essay, of which there are many examples. These words come from James the scholar, not James the enthusiast, as he says toward the close of the passage: "We have no right, therefore, to invoke its [mysticism's] prestige as distinctively in favor of any special belief."

Before proceeding with a typology it may be of interest to probe into this curious retraction or correction which James made after a brilliant and lengthy exposition. For one thing, James was given to wide swings of mood and thought.² William Ernest Hocking once told me that he came to Harvard as a graduate student in order to study under James, because he was attracted to James' sympathetic and insightful treatment of religious subjects. In the classroom, however, he found James to be hypercritical of religion and quickly switched his interest toward Royce and Santayana. There are other respects in which James' states of mind and feeling could not at all be known from his published writings, but are all too plain in unpublished ones.

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At the outset of his exposition of mysticism James denies having had such experiences himself, as in the *Varieties* published in 1902.

Whether my treatment of mystical states will shed more light or darkness, I do not know, for my own constitution shuts me out from their enjoyment almost entirely, and I can speak of them only at second hand. But though forced to look upon the subject so externally, I will be as objective and receptive as I can...³

As a matter of fact, in 1898 James had had just such an experience in the Adirondacks on the slopes of Mt. Marcy. To call attention to just a few selected phrases from his letter to his wife:

...it seemed as if the Gods of all the nature-mythologies were holding an indescribable meeting in my breast with the moral Gods of the inner life...The intense significance of some sort, of the whole scene, if one could only tell the significance...memory and sensation all whirled inexplicably together...I can't find a single word for all that significance, and don't know what it was significant of...⁴

All the four characteristics which he later assigned to the mystical experience are in this account, including the special emphasis he placed on ineffability. There is also the quality of *simultaneity* of elements which ordinarily are incongruous, which I have emphasized and which I believe accounts for the inexpressibility of such experience. As James said, "all whirled inexplicably together."

Also James had experimented with chemically induced mysticism, using nitrous-oxide for a type of intoxication. He said the effect enabled him to understand the "strength and weakness of Hegel's philosophy."⁵ How are we to account for this self-contradiction, claiming not to have had such experiences when we know from his own pen that he had. Indeed, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* itself, he had included an account of extreme fear simultaneously with the image of a helpless "greenish" youth he had seen in the hospital, although he presents this case as if it had happened to somebody else.⁶ These experiences clearly fall within "exceptional mental states," the category within which James included mystical experiences.

The striking aspect of this is that whereas some mystics and believers in psychical phenomena talk long and often of their episodes, there are other mystics who have an extreme reticence about doing so. They are neglected in the literature for the

obvious reason that they do not leave records. We know of these events in James' life (and of four more in later years) only because of his private correspondence.⁷ W. E. Hocking, I am certain, must have had mystical experiences. In conversation he talked freely about the subject and about the experiences of others, but not once did he allude--at least to me--to an experience of his own. I once heard Willard L. Sperry refer in passing to such an experience he had had when seriously ill. When a student asked a question about it, however, Sperry refused to say anything further and appeared to regret that he had mentioned it. These people may very well have talked more openly with intimate friends, but they present a contrast with others who are strongly compelled to publish accounts of "exceptional mental states." My hunch is that this reticence is not due to embarrassment but to a sense that their experiences of illumination or disclosure of meaning are so personal, so private, that there would be something cheap and exhibitionistic in speaking of them openly and casually. That view is difficult to make convincing in an age when the conventional banality believes that the only reason any act or conviction is not flaunted is that it has been suppressed due to unwholesome inhibitions.

Another curious aspect of mysticism, related to James' observations, is that it often happens that the person who has the mystical experience doubts its truth value. James himself is an example. Although at times he thought such experiences might reveal "a continuum of cosmic consciousness," or "windows...upon a more extensive and inclusive world," he states that as a question and hypothesis, with "hypothesis" underlined.⁸ His own such experiences "lacked the character of overwhelming authority with which they are commonly invested, and played only a minor role in his philosophy as a whole."⁹

James made it quite clear that mystics have no right to insist that others accept their claims, and these others have no obligation to be believers.¹⁰ That, of course, obtains with all private and subjectively based claims. However, the curious aspect, again, is that very often the staunchest believers in some mystic's revelation or vision are precisely persons who have had no such experiences themselves. The history of religions abounds with examples in which hearsay has been more powerful than direct experience in producing conviction. This relates directly to the point we have made before in differentiating between mysticism as an experience and so-called "mystical philosophy."¹¹ The experience is quite incidental, really, for mystical philosophies. Huston Smith, whose views are far removed from mine, has made this point well. Referring to Aldous Huxley and Frithjof Schuon, he says they do not ground their metaphysics

(in this case Perennial Philosophy) in experience." 'The Core of the Perennial Philosophy,' he [Huxley] tells us, is 'doctrines.'"¹²

What this discussion is intended to set forth is, first, that the literature and phenomena of mysticism, however defined, are extraordinarily diverse and multifaceted. At the least, that must caution against easy and broad generalizations. It must also make us wary of expecting or imputing some type of logical consistency in the behavior and beliefs associated with mysticism. Huston Smith's argument, as he says, proceeds largely deductively, based on "metaphysical intuitions."¹³ Primarily it is argument by analogy, not in the Thomistic sense, but by illustration. It is not my purpose here to analyze the flaws which I believe undermine that position. It is enough, perhaps, to quote the sentence, speaking of how "the great historical religions" have survived: "God would not have permitted them to endure for such stretches had they been founded on error."¹⁴ That reminds me of what Mary Tyler's brother said when she was accused of witchcraft in Salem and therefore must be guilty: "God would not suffer so many good men to be in error about it."¹⁵ Apart from the obvious objections to such arguments, it is entirely without basis to claim that all great religions were founded on the Perennial Philosophy. One has every right to hold to such a view. It only becomes noxious when it is universalized in the form which says that all other truly religious people believe the same thing, at bottom, but we articulate it with various degrees of inadequacy.

At the same time, I would agree with Smith that there are some universals and uniformities, but I prefer to find them in demonstrable items (like hunger, sleep, sex, social structures, etc.) rather than metaphysical intuitions. And although I do not think he has accurately depicted Steven Katz' position, I would agree with Smith's criticism of the type of philosophy which simply rules out any possibility of cross cultural study. Fortunately we have other options to choose from besides the Perennial Philosophy and what might be called the Prevalent Philosophy.

This discussion prefaces the presentation of a possible typology for sorting out and comparing various forms of interpretation (or belief) found in mysticisms. It is extremely important to understand the following presuppositions and operative principles:

1. A typology is a limited instrument. It does not enable us to know all there is to be known on a subject, nor does it claim finality. It is simply intended to be useful for sorting out diverse forms within a collection of phenomena

which share a common broad label, i.e., which have some common thread of kinship or commonality in ordinary understanding.

2. A typology of empirical or behavioral phenomena will inevitably be an approximation, a rough instrument. Particular examples may be debatable and some cases will spill over into another type.

3. The purpose of a typology is to *listen* to what proponents of a given identity say and to *see* what they do, in order to avoid imposing our own preconceptions on them, and in order to *perceive their meaning* to the extent possible. This purpose, then, is quite different from Frithjof Schuon's classification according to lower and higher types (exoteric and esoteric).¹⁶

4. There are *degrees* of adequacy in understanding and *degrees* of importance in data and topics.¹⁷

5. The following basic assumption is explicitly denied: That clarity of understanding is undesirable and detrimental to spiritual enlightenment.

6. Within any one of the proposed types there will be a wide range of thought and quality. All that a particular type indicates is that the forms of mysticism which fall within that type share a common view of what the nature of the divine (or its functional equivalent) is in relation to human experience, understanding, and significance.

II. a CLASSIFICATION OF MODES OF THOUGHT USED BY MYSTICS

Introductory explanation: Mystics characteristically have stated a system of thought in connection with their experience and understanding. Now a "system of thought" as intended here is not necessarily a fully developed metaphysics presented in technical terms. It is simply the way an individual looks at life and the environing reality surrounding and supporting it-- and in some views, transcending it--, and in terms of which understands, interprets, responds, and relates. It is the way in which a person "makes sense" out of things. Putting it that way does not impose any particular view on life-views. For some, the basic view is that existence is absurd or beyond understanding or idiotic or utterly meaningless--"a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing." But any one of those life-views is a view, a way of seeing things, and different from some other ways of viewing and interpreting. There is no way of seeing things, of understanding life, which is not a view. Mystics are no exception to this.

Thus one of the unnecessary difficulties that arises with mysticism is that the mystical experience is ineffable, just as many, many experiences are in that their qualities cannot be adequately conveyed by words. You may tell another person of an episode of intense fear and there will be understanding, but the fear and its qualities of feeling will not have been transmitted to that person. So it is with hundreds of experiential qualities, including mystical experience. But somehow this justifiable recognition of essential ineffability is transferred to the claims made about the nature of reality, which is quite another matter. There is nothing ineffable--incapable of any form of communicated understanding--about being told that reality is a unity or that the phenomenal world is an appearance or that union with the divine was delectable or inspiring or awesome or fearful. All too often mystics have taken refuge behind the claim of ineffability--which is quite appropriate with regard to states of feeling and subjective qualities of experience--, attempting to apply it to their life-view or reality claims, which are not at all ineffable. The claim, however, is intended to prevent any possible debate, analysis, or critique. This accounts for the somewhat irritating propensity of the classical mystics to claim that their entire illumination is beyond human understanding and that words cannot convey it, only to proceed to tell us at some length and in contorted language what the true nature of Reality or God or the Void is.

Mystics, like other people, have a view. Generally they relate that view to their experience. The proposed typology is not intended at all to rate levels of "spiritual enlightenment," but simply to recognize the differences between and among the life-views and reality theories of assorted mystics.

1. *Platonism.* The basic understanding is that the consummate experience is awareness of a reality rather than absorption in or union with that reality. What mysticism reveals is the ultimate reality of an order or realm and the possibility of undistorted, pure awareness or comprehension of that transcendent reality. Now the nature of this ultimate and transcendent reality is variously interpreted as realm, law, principle, being, beauty, holiness, or some combination of these. It often functions as a father figure, in which the mystical experience serves as transition from a state of disharmony to one of submission, acceptance, obedience, conformity, love. This results in relief, joy, transport. As Plato says, "at last the vision is revealed...of a single science, which is the science of beauty everywhere." That life above all others is "the contemplation of beauty absolute...not images of beauty, but realities."¹⁸ It is a form of perception. The paradigm image is aesthetic contemplation. The model narrative would be the parable of the prodigal son.

2. *Stoicism.* This is a mysticism of depth rather than transport. It is a deeper immersion in the stream of existence. Individuality is properly understood as a manifestation of the ultimate cosmic reality, force, stream, or principle. Thus the mystical illumination provides release from illusion. There is acknowledgement of one's radical, absolute oneness with the immanent ultimate reality, but without loss of unique individuality. The characteristic response is not ecstasy but serenity. The transition is from superficiality to depth, from confusion to insight, from hubris to interdependence. So Epictetus: "You are a citizen of the universe and a part of it...for you have the faculty to understand the divine governance of the universe and to reason on its sequence." "Things must needs move in a cycle, one thing giving way to another, and some things must pass away, and others come into being...the universe is full of friends--the gods first, and after them human beings, whom nature has made akin to one another."¹⁹ The paradigm image is swimming in a stream. The narrative would be a story like "Candide" where after unsatisfactory wandering one discovers the treasure of meaning in the place where one is.

3. *Neoplatonism.* The phenomenal world of experience and observation is deficient in reality (*maya*). Beyond it is another realm that is authentically real and whose attributes are in many ways contrary to those of earth and life upon it. Knowledge of nature and natural phenomena cannot lead to the transcendent knowledge of "Reality." Salvation is knowledge of the transcendent and that we are derived that realm, belong to it and not to the natural world. So far this is similar to much that Plato said. Where it differs is in its concept of mysticism, which here is a union with the transcendent realm or order of being. Knowledge (gnosis, e.g.) of that realm is often regarded as being a science, i.e. having principles and laws and dependable methodology, but of course entirely different from the experimental, natural sciences. A great deal of classical mystical literature is of this type. Plotinus: "The present life, and which is without God, is a vestige of life, and an imitation of that life which is real." "That which is divine cannot be unfolded to the multitude...[but only] to anyone fortunately able to perceive it."²⁰ As different as they are in many respects, this is the essential character of the Perennial Philosophy, Philo Judaeus, Mani, Vendanta, Santideva, Dionysius the Areopagite, Gnosticism, and, say, Michael de Molinos. One paradigm image is sunlight, from which we come and to which the enlightened (or ecstatic mystics) return in deliverance from this defective or deficient earth. The other is an ocean of being into which we are absorbed or cave into which we are swallowed. The narrative which relates this would be *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* or *The Golden Ass of Apuleius*.

4. *Absolute Idealism (or Hegelianism)*. The essential metaphysical pattern here is that the natural world is a manifestation of the ultimate reality. Thus creation is essentially good, although contingent and less really real than the Absolute (or Geist). Like Neoplatonism it is a recasting of Plato's thought into a monism and in stressing the deficiency of the phenomenal world. But there is a clear difference between regarding creation as deficient and regarding it as incorrigibly evil or without significance. For in the many schools of Hegelianism human affairs and responsibilities have serious importance, whereas in Neoplatonism they are to be undergone and tolerated, but are without any real significance. I would put Royce, Hocking, Stace, Underhill, Tillich (at times), and Eckhart and the *Theologica Germanica* in this type. It would surely be in order to include some Buddhist, Muslim, and Confucian examples, but I am not confident enough of my knowledge in those areas to single out the Hegelian from the world-denying type.

5. *Christ Mysticism*. Here the mystical union or communion or co-presence is with a human-divine figure, a hero or heroine. Now the divine figure is an incarnation (avatar or manifestation) of God, but God or the Ultimate is unreachable and thus the union is with this particular God-person, who appeared in this particular historical form. It is Christ or Meher Baba, Father Divine or Krishna, Gotama Buddha or Vishnu, with whom the union occurs. In this type it is under a particular humanoid name and a particular remembered form and locale that the mystical literature speaks. This is sharply contrasted with religions in which the prophet is very highly venerated (e.g. Mohammed or Bahau-lah), but still the mystical union is with God.²¹ Thus Paul's is a Christ mysticism whereas Augustine, who was so Pauline, belongs in the Neoplatonic type. Examples of Christ mysticism would be van Ruysbroek, Comensky, the Fourth Gospel, and some schools of Buddhism and Hinduism. The paradigmatic metaphor is sexual union, stressing the word metaphor. Here again I have used a Western term for the type title simply because it is more familiar. It could probably have been labeled more accurately Avatar Mysticism.

6. *Zen*. (Chinese, Ch'an) This form of Buddhism, which has several schools, stresses disciplines which bring satori (enlightenment). It is similar to the Stoic view in that the divine is potentially present in every person. Ordinary sense perception and methods of rational analysis do not lead to enlightenment, contrary to Stoicism. It is similar to some forms of Christ Mysticism in that the divine in general means nothing, and must be particularized to be understood, but would not at all seek union with a divine-human figure. While we do not find many examples in religious literature, aside from Zen, there are many examples to be found in poetry in many cultures, which celebrates

the uniqueness of particular things, not their general or universal attributes. "Nothingness" and "unknowability" often characterize the divine in general or at large. Wieman is his later years wrote in this vein and Whitehead stressed concreteness, admitting in one instance that as much as he admired Aristotle's metaphysics, his views "did not lead him [Aristotle] very far towards the production of a God available for religious purposes."²² At least in some forms of Zen it is regarded as necessary to dispense with a quest for God and be led into the nature of our own selves. It is not agnostic; it is ignostic, that is, it does not understand the questions of theology and metaphysics. So D. T. Suzuki: "Zen abhors anything coming between the fact and ourselves." "No amount of wordy explanations will ever lead us into the nature of our own selves. The more you explain, the further it runs away from you." "Zen never explains, but indicates..." The last two of Zen's precepts are: "Direct pointing to the soul"; "Seeing into one's nature and the attainment of Buddhahood."²³ The paradigm is aesthetic enthrallment or innocent childish fascination. The narrative account would be a Zen koan or Kafkaesque tale.

7. *Animism*. This type would be found in religions where the holy powers are manifest in particular forms, and the mystical experience is to be enrapt in the presence of one of those gods or divinities. There may or may not be an implicit monotheism or cosmic deity. This type of belief in many holy beings can co-exist quite comfortably with or without monotheism, but the experience of the holy is more likely to be with one of these lesser god-forms. Official Christianity and Judaism have generally been in strong opposition to anything like this, because it was seen as polytheism. However it appears to me that very often animistic beliefs and experiences have flourished in the actual religion of Christians and Jews. This is not merely in venerated saints and charismatic figures, but in poltergeists and leprechauns and a multitude of other spirit beings. Such folk beliefs do not necessarily constitute mysticism, but it would be surprising to me if there were not examples of experiences believed to be an unmediated, intense awareness of the holy in plants, animals, and spirits found in Christian and Jewish communities. In any case there are ample numbers of cultures in which a nature religion provides vivid forms of mysticism which cannot be placed in any of the previous types. Needless to say nothing derogatory is to be attached to the term "animism." The paradigm model would, I think, be play and games. The best narratives would be the Origin Myths of a people. My favorite statement of this perspective comes from a Navajo:

When a man goes into a corn field he feels that he is in a holy place, that he is walking among Holy People, White Corn Boy, Yellow Corn Girl, Pollen Boy, Corn Bug Girl, Blue Corn

Boy, and Variegated Corn Girl. If your fields are in good shape you feel that the Holy People are with you, and you feel buoyed up in spirit when you get back home. If your field is dried up you are down-hearted because the Holy People are not helping you.²⁴

But one also finds a different version of this same type in contemporary poets who do not want to be identified with traditional religion, as in E. E. Cummings, "O Sweet Spontaneous." The first lines denounce prurient philosophers and naughty science for poking around to explain "sweet spontaneous earth"; and then religions which have squeezed and buffeted earth that "thou [earth] mightest conceive gods." Whereupon,

thou answerest

them only with

spring²⁵

III. NATURAL MYSTICISM

This essay concludes with a characterization of natural mysticism. For one thing that shows by example the limited, although useful purpose, of a typology. For natural mysticism can be found in several of the types, especially in Stoicism, Zen, and some poetic versions of Animism. It is naturalistic in denying any bifurcation of existence into categories of natural and supernatural and any epistemological bifurcation into exoteric and esoteric, or conventional and epistemologically privileged. Any form of mystical experience, from the low key to awesome, does not yield information but confirms and deepens knowledge or convictions available by other means of thought and investigation.

The religious values of natural mysticism are at some points those often found also in supernatural or esoteric mysticism. Natural mysticism does not have exclusive claim upon the items which follow. However, it is sometimes argued that there is no point at all in naturalistic forms of religion, whereas the counter argument is that everything which is of durable value in religion is available in a natural piety and less likely to be lost sight of due to the diversions created in supernaturalism by more spectacular, but useless, claims. The following are some of the values in natural mysticism.

1. *Confirms and validates our faltering convictions.* As such it is an undergirding experience. That applies to worthy and unworthy convictions. If they are wholesome and life enrich-

ing, they are strengthened. If destructive and hateful, then that is re-enforced. The claim is simply that naturalistic mysticism is less vulnerable to exclusivist and hateful illusions. Naturalistic nationalism is another matter.

2. *Corrects and supplements our exaggerated sense of the subject-object division.* Our dependency on discursive, analytic thought and on visual and tactile sensa tends to view things as absolutely discrete. Some mysticism, as noted in the previous paper, wipes out individuality and particularity altogether. Natural mysticism recovers the interrelatedness of all things, awareness of the earth as a living biosphere, but retains also the culminative definiteness of particular events, persons, ideas, groups.

3. *Psychological release and renewal.* This is in part a feeling; it is also an outlook. It is related to sex/eros--the love of life (or reality or existence). There is the catharsis side of relief and release, and the nourishing side of joy and satisfaction. There is reassurance that we are capable of liberation from anxiety (Rom. 8:15), and have within us a universal secret, like that of Camus' "invincible summer," which provides a sanction of worth.

4. *Durability.* Intense experiences fade. We can, as has been said, recover the memory of them, but not the feelings themselves. Not fully. One of the hallmarks of authentic mysticism, as I see it, is the attribute of continuing and recoverable morale.

5. *Vivification.* The drabness produced as a residue of routine, the smog of the spirit, and the accumulated film which clings to the lenses of our outlook are brushed aside to disclose the luminous nature of existence, its color and intensity. In natural mysticism that involves recovery of the sense of actuality--the eachness and suchness--of all things including the self and the passing whim. It is not escape; it is recovery.

6. *Yields the peace of God* (or satori, bodhi, samadhi, sacrament of silence, illumination, rapture, etc. etc.). It is a recognition of enjoyed (possessed, digested, nutritional) values in our lives, which have not been verbalized, and perhaps cannot be. The sense of acceptance includes self-acceptance and cosmic at-homeness. A very important aspect of this quality is that it is not dependent upon social recognition or peer support. It comes from within, as Marcus Aurelius said, "Within is the fountain of good, which will ever bubble up, if you will ever dig."²⁶

7. *Identity.* The sharpened sense of self-ness, no less than of a rock or galaxy, is surely one of religion's important contributions. However, it often gains poignancy only in terms of sinfulness, guilt, paranoia, and condemnation of the world. New Thought faiths reacted against that negativism in emphasizing rather exclusively a positive and self-affirming optimism. One need not adopt tunnel vision optimism or narcissistic preoccupation to see that there is something unwholesome about spiritual negativism and its accompanying self-righteousness. Identity is known in relation to enviroing realities and in contrast with companions, whether at hand or in one's heritage. Self recognition is not opposed to bonds of belonging and roots of mutuality. A particular blossom comes forth in its due time not in spite of belonging to a plant and not in spite of that plant's rootedness in the soil, but by virtue of it. Recovery of this perception, especially when that *dawns* upon us with power, discloses with conviction the fragile and precious and fleeting nature of our common existence. Its holiness.

Thus, in sum, it confirms in thought, feeling, and spirit that life has depth of meaning. This is not a formula answer to the question, "what is the meaning of life?" Rather, it dissolves the question. (Buber) One has no need to ask that and if answered, the Zen reply, "Three bags of flax" will do as well as a Barthian "To be apprehended in The Faith," or "that super-essential Darkness which is hidden by all the light that is in existent things" (Dionysius), or best of all, "What sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath." (Melville)

ENDNOTES

1. *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (N.Y.: Longmans Green, 1902), Lectures XVI and XVII, sec. 2 near the end of the chapter. In the Modern Library edition it is p. 416. Hereafter *Varieties*.

2. Ralph Barton Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, Briefer Version. N.Y.: Braziller, 1954, 365 ff. Indeed, James' sister Alice said William was "just like a blob of mercury." Hereafter Perry.

3. Opening paragraph of Lecture XVI.

4. Perry 384.

5. W. James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (N.Y.: Longmans Green, 1897), 294.
6. *Op. cit.*, 157 (pp. 160 f. in original ed.). Cf. Perry 363 f.
7. Perry, 364.
8. *Varieties*, 364, 419.
9. Perry, 364.
10. *Varieties*, 415.
11. "Mysticism: An Analysis and Interpretation," *Iliff Review*, XLIV (Winter, 1987), No. 1).
12. Huston Smith, "Is there a Perennial Philosophy?" *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LV (Fall, 1987), No. 3, p. 554. Hereafter designated H. Smith. The Perennial Philosophy is like Gnosticism or Vedanta. It stresses the "appearance" nature of the natural world. Huxley's characterization as summarized by H. Smith is so general that it could be applied to several other philosophical positions. My reading of this view is that the less-than-real nature of the world is emphasized far more than is indicated there. (H. Smith, 554, n. 13). Identity with true reality (beyond the world) is not only the chief human purpose, but all other purposes are trivial.
13. *Ibid.*, 562, 554.
14. *Ibid.*, 562.
15. Marion L. Starkey, *The Devil in Massachusetts* (N.Y.: Knopf, 1949), 188.
16. In his *The Transcendent Unity of Religions*, Revised ed. (N.Y.: Harper and Row, 1975), xi ff., 29 f., 51 ff.
17. H. Smith puts this well: "Claims for similarities or differences spin their wheels until they get down to ways and degrees in which things differ or are alike..." 558.
18. *Symposium*.
19. Epictetus, *Discourses*, II. 10; III, 24.
20. Plotinus, *Enneads*, 316, 320, in the Thomas Taylor ed. (London: Bell, 1929).

21. The generalization stated applies only to "mainstream" versions. In Islam and Judaism, as elsewhere, there have been significant movements focussed on a demigod in a manner like what I mean by Christ Mysticism, but certainly not called that, as e.g., sometimes centered in the Mahdi in Islam.

22. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (N.Y.: Macmillan, 1926), 249.

23. *Essays in Zen Buddhism: First Series* (N.Y.: Grove, 1927), "Introduction."

24. Hill, "Navaho Agricultural and Hunting Methods," *Yale Publications in Anthropology*, 18 (1938), 53.

25. The reason for citing only phrases from the poem is that Cummings' verse is so captivating that one gets caught up in the magic of the poem, whereas the purpose here is to focus on the ideas which hold it together. The poem is found in many collections, e.g., C. F. Main, ed.: *A College Book of Verse* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1970), 223.

26. *Meditations*, Bk. VII, no. 59.

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