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TOWARD A HUMANISTIC-TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Peter A. Campbell was born January 21, 1935, in San Francisco, California. He received the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1957 and the Master of Arts degree and Licentiate in Philosophy in 1959 from Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington. The title of his thesis was The Marxian Concept of Individual Freedom in Society. He received the S.T.M. and Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the Department of Theology, University of Santa Clara, California in 1966. He is the co-author of three books: Becoming a Person in the Whole Christ, (1967); The In-Between: Evolution in Christian Faith, (1969); and Please Touch, (1969), published by Sheed & Ward, Inc., New York.

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CHAPTER I

GENESIS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I have often been struck by the way research conclusions always mean more to me when I can situate them within the lived context of their author's initial, often somewhat confused attempt to be faithful to the original flash of intuition or basic questions that got him started in the first place. Because I feel we need to learn respect for our hunches and precious first glimmerings of potentially fruitful insight, I should like to spend a short time outlining how I arrived at the point where I am today in a research project which, as far as I am concerned, stretches far beyond the last page of this dissertation. If I have been able to allow the generation of any novel perceptions or original hypotheses within myself, I feel certain that the crucial ingredients of fascination, commitment, tolerance of ambiguity and the synthetic falling into place or connectedness that I feel has characterized various stages of my research, all lie tucked into the folds of my earlier, rather disorganized groping for significant pattern in the incredibly diffuse mass of data which confronted me.

In general, I feel that part of the faith of science is that if serious people earnestly work at a problem over a long period of time with little or no success, the cause of

their failure lies not in the insolubility of the problem but in asking the wrong questions about it. If we truly desire new knowledge we need an entirely new set of questions that can open up unusual vistas on the subject of research and hopefully unleash radically different perceptions in the investigator that may lead to novel and creative solutions. To seemingly overstate a point (at least for the moment) it is almost as though the fruitful outcome and mind-shaking breakthroughs of scientific investigation are less the product of refined methods to get at the structure of reality, and more the generation of novel perceptions and daring hypotheses in the researcher.

While I don't pretend that the questions and hypotheses forming the backbone of this dissertation are particularly 'daring', I do believe they represent an original formulation of how Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology can make a significant contribution to the study of primary

religious experience.¹ In this sense I feel they expand the frontiers of knowledge on a worthwhile and important subject,

¹ Religious experience covers such a wide range of highly individualized attitudes and responses, both healthy and pathological, that it would be hopeless to attempt discussing the subject globally. Some limiting or qualifying adjective is necessary in order to narrow the range of experience covered. I am mainly concerned with a type of inner, subjective, personal experience that ordinarily is not directly dependent upon particular church-affiliation or a pre-established set of dogmatic overbeliefs which a person may hold. Moreover, as my presentation develops, it will become clear that a further limitation I place on the phrase religious experience is that I am primarily interested in the integrating experiences that lead toward a life of healthy growth, and fuller human functioning as this has been described by various psychologists who have chosen to emphasize this orientation rather than a study of pathology.

I use the term primary of religious experience in the same sense that Dr. Walter Houston Clark has described it in his work on The Psychology of Religion: "... the inner experience of the individual when he senses a Beyond, especially as evidenced by the effect of this experience on his behavior when he actively attempts to harmonize his life with the Beyond." (Walter Houston Clark, The Psychology of Religion, New York, MacMillan, 1968, p. 22)

My concern is not with a theistic or non-theistic interpretation of the "Beyond". I understand this word as being comparable to the "More" of William James in the conclusion to The Varieties of Religious Experience. It would also seem to parallel the "All" of J. F. T. Bugental in The Search for Authenticity and of Evelyn Underhill in Mysticism, and the "divine Ground" of Aldous Huxley in The Perennial Philosophy.

Secondary religious experience and behavior may best be described as a chosen mode of being and acting after one has had a primary experience. e.g. after an intense conversion experience (primary) a person may then join a church and present himself for worship services every Sunday for the remainder of his life (secondary).

Tertiary religious experience and behavior has no primary element connected with it. It refers to the experience of a person for whom religion is a matter of routine or convention, accepted on the authority of another.

one that is receiving increased attention today because of its intimate connection with popular interest in various forms of meditation and altered states of consciousness.

1. Initial Areas of Interest.

To begin, then, I can identify at least three general areas of interest which have consistently held my attention and continually interacted with one another in my own mind. I would often find myself mulling them over as I walked home from the office and, fortunately, because I had no immediate need to organize them, I became habituated to allowing a kind of loose, easy-going freedom of interplay so no single element became hide-bound within its own rigid categories and could not freely interpenetrate the other two. Let me give these general areas a descriptive title before examining each of them in particular.

The first was my growing interest in methodology in the psychology of religion, particularly as it grappled with the problem of getting at more profound, personal kinds of religious experience that seemed to elude the accurate measurement demanded by rigorous scientific investigation. The second area comprised my long-standing enjoyment of reading in Humanistic, and more recently Transpersonal psychology. I purposefully use the word enjoyment because such reading represented for me not only the fulfilling of a professional

requirement, but it was also something that I liked to do. The final influence is really a multi-dimensional one, but I believe I can trace the element of seminal fascination back to a seminar on Mysticism and Psychology which I taught one Fall semester a few years ago. These, then, are the sources. I should now like to retrace my steps through each of them, trying to pick out some of the key questions, intuitions, hunches and problem areas which were raised as I grew together with the integration of the three that was taking place within myself.

a) Methodology in the Psychology of Religion

Let me begin, then, with the question of methodology. I find myself inclined to agree with Gregory Baum's assessment of the kinds of people who become preoccupied with meth-idolatry.² He reduces them to two groups. The first is made up of those whose position within the academic setting is being threatened by advances in a closely related field, and they therefore become intensely interested in the question of methodology in order to prove that their approach to a problem is really quite different from that of another discipline. Such pre-occupation is usually more

² These highly personal reflections are drawn from remarks made during a graduate seminar which Gregory Baum conducted at St. Paul's University in Ottawa, October, 1971.

political than academic. It is primarily concerned with a justification for one's academic and professional existence and I must confess that in moments when I was ruthlessly honest with myself I discovered that I was frequently more concerned with how I could justify that what I was doing was really different from pastoral psychology or theology than I was with the various aspects of religious experience I had chosen to investigate.

The second group of methodology lovers Baum identifies is usually made up of older men who have spent a lifetime in a particular field. Now, in their declining years, they are bent upon a campaign of tidying-up their insights, pulling in the loose ends, and, in general, tying the final ribbon on the package which they identify with as their contribution to expanding the frontiers of knowledge. Unless they are exceptional men, they usually become irked and quite peevish when younger colleagues insist on pulling at the wrappings, exposing loose ends, and, in general, 'raising hell' with the neat, clear-cut categories and modes of procedure which form the basis for their author's life-contribution.

Even though I freely admit to a certain amount of mixed motivation behind my growing involvement with questions of methodology in the psychology of religion, I by no means consider it a total waste. Indeed, the more I got into it and into the history of how classical authors in this field

had tried to deal with religious experience, the more I became fascinated with the question myself.

Previous pastoral work had somewhat prepared me for the attempt to integrate religion and psychology, but since my primary operational methodology had been that of a theologian, I invariably approached the psychological dynamics of human experience with the basic question: How can I explain this particular experience in terms of a developed and contemporary view of Christian theology? There was nothing essentially wrong with such an approach, and I still feel it represented an enlightened step forward on my part. This was especially true since I had by this stage in my own theological development reached a point where I was willing to examine any significant human experience with a view to discerning its religious implications.

Furthermore, I was even able to go one step further as a theologian and allow the psychological dynamics of an experience to first speak for themselves, thereby dictating the very direction I took in my theologizing. A perceptive theologian friend, upon writing me about a publication of mine that attempted to theologize in the manner I have just described, was quick to note that my co-author and I had drawn the theology out of the psychology--a significant inversion of method at that time.

However, the limitations of such an approach soon became evident because the primary focus of attention was still on theology. As a result, the dynamics of experience were not sufficiently accepted and studied in themselves as intrinsically religious operations and events. Even though I was personally convinced of the deeply religious nature of the various experiences I used to ground my theological reflections, I still went outside the experience to find my religious meaning. Whether it was a developed theology of the Body of Christ, or the Trinitarian and community dimension of the Christian concept of God, or the biblical understanding of Agape as the power of God's presence with us, the religious meaning of a particular experience was drawn from a series of conceptualizations and traditions that were not necessarily a conscious or even accepted part of the original experience that prompted me to investigate its religious dimension. In so many instances of pastoral work, however, it seemed to me that there was a deeply religious dimension operative within an experience even apart from the attempt to verbalize or become conscious of it in terms of accepted religious traditions.

I began to suspect that religious people and theologians had a ready-made vocabulary to describe religious experience and that this could actually get in the way of an accurate assessment of the quality of what I was coming to

believe in as a kind of organismic religious awareness. I found that Marghanita Laski had discovered this same problem during her investigation of three groups whom she studied in order to discern the nature of ecstasy as a secular and religious experience. Mrs. Laski found that:

To a substantial extent the people in the religious group knew the vocabulary for such experiences before they knew the experiences; inevitably, when the experiences are known, they tend to be recounted in the vocabulary already accepted as appropriate.³

This made immediate sense to me because I felt certain that if a Buddhist, a Moslem, a Christian and a free-thinker had what they felt were significant religious experiences, they would certainly not explain them the same way even though the dynamics at work in each case might have been quite similar. Every major religious tradition has built up a detailed language to describe more advanced states of religious consciousness. Within the Christian tradition the imagery and vocabulary are highly evolved, especially in mystical literature. Here a complex language is used which struggles to be faithful to orthodox teaching. The accounts of Christian mystics will, for example, often be expressly Trinitarian and their descriptions of more intense moments of religious consciousness will reflect the Christological

³ Marghanita Laski, Ecstasy: A Study of Some Secular and Religious Experiences, London, Cresset Press, 1961, p. 14.

orientations of the believer. This gives a specifically Christian coloring not only to the account, but also, I am sure, to the original experience itself.

We would all be somewhat surprised should a Buddhist experience visions of Christ or a Christian mystic describe ecstatic accounts of insight into the Dharma-nature. This realization raised a question in my mind which I initially formulated as follows: Could it be that there was some kind of basic, organismic religious experience common to all men simply because they were evolving⁴ human beings, but which was usually expressed by them in the accepted categories and vocabulary of an established religion to which they might belong?

My question seemed valid enough, especially when I recalled that a convenient term used to describe the web of perceptual and conceptual patterns for interpreting religious phenomena was the little used word overbelief. Marghanita Laski had employed the term to relate her own research to that of William James.

⁴ I have chosen to include a descriptive word like evolving at this point in order to stress that the kinds of organismic religious experience I am primarily concerned with are those that contribute to integration and fuller human functioning.

Overbelief made its first dictionary appearance in the 1933 supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary where it was defined as: 'Belief in more than is warranted by the evidence or in what cannot be verified.' The first use cited is in 1900, but the best-known example of its use is William James's in Varieties of Religious Experience first published in 1902. Here James uses overbelief as I shall principally use it, to name the subjective gloss or interpretation placed by people on their experiences, and although he believed, as he put it, that 'the most interesting and valuable things about a man are usually his over-beliefs', he still thought it proper, in trying to discover the nature of religious experience, to disregard the overbeliefs and confine himself to what was common and generic.⁵

When I first read this passage I remember balking somewhat as a theologian because I felt it did not sufficiently take into account the role of revelation and passing on of established tradition within a religious community. But then I realized that within the empirical setting where the word overbelief was intended to function, it was quite right to exclude this sort of influence because the evidence with which it worked and the type of verification which it sought was of a different sort than that provided by the data of revelation. I still felt that subtle variables were not being included here, because who can say what deep-seated influence the life and traditions of a community of believers has on one of its members' inner capacity for religious experience--whether or not he chooses to verbalize what has happened to him? But on the whole I was in agreement with

5 Marghanita Laski, Op. Cit., p. 20.

the statement because I felt that if scientific investigation of religion was to make any positive gains it had to be able to pierce the web of culturally inherited and established religious overbeliefs in order to get at the underlying psychological mechanisms and experiences which, I was becoming more and more convinced, actually rooted the superstructures of various established religions right within the human organism itself.

I believe one reason I found early North American writers in the psychology of religion so refreshing was because their approach to religious experience was free from many of the prejudices, established thought patterns, and traditional value systems of theology. Hence, I found them approaching what for me were time-worn problems with a spontaneous freshness which generated new questions and different patterns of perception in myself that I hoped might lead to some kind of breakthrough.

The more I read men like James, Pratt, Starbuck, Leuba, Ames, Coe and others, the more I realized that an approach to the religious in man, when followed by those who could conduct their investigations without one eye cautiously cocked on vested ecclesiastical and dogmatic interests, did not usually follow the path of analyzing traditional beliefs, moral codes and conduct or ritual expression. This did not mean, of course, that these authors were totally free from

their own insular preoccupations arising from their personal biases toward religion and commitment to one side or other of various issues being fought out by the different schools of psychology.

However, in general, I found in them a rather wide-ranging view of the whole of human life together with an attempt to focus on certain significant moments regardless of whether these fit the mould of traditional religious categories. The institutional aspects of religion were not denied, but simply situated within a broader framework where they could be critically evaluated as to whether they actually did, in fact, tap into or contain what the individual sensed to be the profoundly religious dimension of his or her life.

My reading served to further convince me that in the final analysis, the roots of religion lay far deeper than any particular institutionalized expression and the various churches and differing religious traditions were able to continue functioning principally to the extent that they somehow tapped into and continued to adequately express the organic religious dimension of human existence itself.

It was the deeper nature of religious response in general that began to fascinate me. I found myself employing words like organismic as a poor, and to my way of thinking quite imprecise, manner of approaching the dimension of human

existence I wanted to examine in itself as somehow being a primary vehicle of religious experience within the family of man. But conceptual language simply could not get at much less articulate what it was I was trying to investigate. I was convinced there was a body-language, an organismic experience of transcendence quite independent of any particular religious tradition whose highly developed overbeliefs might or might not have been known by the person who had what he considered to be a religious experience.

At this point in my initial reflections, I had to come to grips with the question of methodology, not to justify my academic status, and certainly not in order to make some sort of grand synthesis. Indeed, by this point most of the theological principles I had previously sworn by in my study of religion were hopelessly irrelevant for the study I was about to undertake--and synthesis was a laughable impossibility. I could still see a definite place for Christian theology, however, but only after I had been able to somehow work my way into the inner dynamics of human experience which supported the superstructure of religious practice and belief.

If there was an organic basis, a kind of biological rooting of religious experience within human nature itself, it would subsequently become important to work the implications of this out in terms of various religious traditions,

community experiences, modes of theological inquiry, etc. Here Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Islamic or any theology could play an important role by relating present experience with a long and fruitful religious tradition. It could also indicate possible directions for healthy evolution sufficiently consistent with that same tradition that people would not needlessly be torn from the familiar moorings which had given them a certain stability in life. This I feel is extremely important for I have always been mindful of Gordon Allport's admonition that

... wherever religious systems are hopelessly disrupted, the consequences for the life of the people are disastrous, unless some equivalent systems of belief replace them.⁶

The problem of methodology which I faced was really one of moving beyond theology into the psychological dynamics and organismic underpinnings of religious experience itself. I realize that many theologians would question my use of the phrase moving beyond with respect to theology and refer to the direction I was taking as patently regressive. However, I feel that this type of judgment represents more pique than precision. When one has an unduly exalted notion of the place of his discipline within the hierarchy of academic subjects, especially for representatives of what has been called

⁶ Gordon W. Allport, The Individual and His Religion, New York, MacMillan, 1967, p. 26-27.

the queen of the sciences, it comes as a distinct shock to realize that the biblical dictum "he who is first shall be last" applies to more than seating arrangements at table. However, as a theologian myself I was consoled by the fact that Jesus ate with prostitutes and sinners. So there was still hope.

Let me now try to formulate the methodological problem as clearly as I can. In The Varieties of Religious Experience William James had approached his survey of private religion largely through an examination of personal documents. Starbuck did the same in his study of conversion and so too did many of the early writers who made copious use of anecdotes, selections from diaries, personal correspondence and autobiographical material.

However, despite the psychologists' efforts to gather this diffuse material into some kind of coherent unity, numerous problems of a different sort than those I had been accustomed to handling as a theologian began to make themselves evident. Once the level of tidy theological precisions had been left behind and one began bobbing about on a vast sea of subjective experiences, the difficulty of interpretation and evaluation became paramount. As overbelief succeeded overbelief and rapturous accounts of mystic ecstasy faded off into language that no one could possibly understand, the question of how to handle such slippery subject matter in a

traditional scientific manner became almost ludicrous. If one thought in terms of more traditional psychological goals such as understanding, prediction, and control, only the first seemed remotely feasible and even then only if some viable criteria could be evolved to evaluate the highly subjective experience in question.

A second basic question then began to formulate itself in my mind at this early stage of thoughtful reading and reflection. How was it possible to have a valid science of purely subjective experience? I was already somewhat familiar with the controversy over idiographic versus nomothetic approaches in psychology, but it seemed to me that the basic clash between these two orientations was intensified to its highest point in the study of religion.

The idiographic concept is of high importance for the psychology of religion. Naturally, the nomothetic approach is very useful, particularly in the study of the secondary and tertiary forms of religious behavior. Yet primary religion is much more individualized. Furthermore, its significance often increases in proportion to its individuality, and there is no area of human experience where the insights of the individual are of more importance or of more influence than they are in religion. Indeed, it has been the insistence by most scientific students of religion on the nomothetic approach which has caused them to concentrate on religion's more common secondary and tertiary forms, and which has given them a bad name with sensitive religious minds who somehow feel that there is "something more" that has been left out.⁷

⁷ Walter Houston Clark, The Psychology of Religion, New York, MacMillan, 1968, p. 34.

Comments like this brought to mind Gordon Allport's succinct evaluation of the problem when he wrote that the academic disciplines, especially theology and the sciences of man would simply have to learn to accommodate themselves to "... the one disturbing truth that there are as many varieties of religious experience as there are religiously inclined mortals upon the earth".⁸

Allport had further spelled this out in his concluding remarks to a chapter on the origins of the religious quest.

The conclusion we come to is that the subjective religious attitude of every individual is, in both its essential and nonessential features, unlike that of any other individual. The roots of religion are so numerous, the weight of their influence in individual lives so varied, and the forms of rational interpretation so endless, that uniformity of product is impossible. Only in respect to certain basic biological functions do men closely resemble one another. In the higher reaches of personality uniqueness of organization becomes more apparent. And since no department of personality is subject to more complex development than the religious sentiment, it is precisely in this area that we must expect to find the ultimate divergences.⁹

My only conclusion to such a statement could be that if a science of subjective experience were at all possible, it would most likely meet its severest challenge when attempting to interpret and evaluate the nature and psychological dynamics

8 Gordon W. Allport, Op. Cit., p. 30.

9 Ibid., p. 29.

involved in religious experience.

Perhaps it was during this effort to sort out in my own mind possible ways of investigating the highly subjective contents and character of primary religious experience that I instinctively turned to an orientation in psychology which had for a long time fascinated me. I refer, of course, to my reading in Humanistic and Transpersonal psychology--the second general area of influence I have listed.

b) Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology

By the time I had reached this stage in my development away from a purely theological orientation to the study of primary religious experience I began to realize that the area I was moving into, loosely termed the psychology of religion, was itself a rather nebulous, ill-defined collection of exceedingly disparate methodologies and approaches to the study of religious phenomena. In theology I at least had clarity even though the connection of that about which I was clear with human experience was on occasion somewhat obscure. But in this new area I soon found that if I were to make any headway at all I would have to begin by simply acknowledging the wisdom and realism of Gardner Murphy's evaluation of the situation:

If, then, we ask the broad question: "What kind of psychology enters usefully into the psychology of religion?" the answer must be that many divergent psychological preconceptions and methods have at various times influenced those who have studied the psychology of religion. This will quickly reveal that the enterprise is a highly biased one--biased from the point of view of the sociology of knowledge; biased from the point of view of the specific kinds of religious experience which were of interest to scholars; biased in terms of the kinds of psychology available at the time and place the studies were made; and biased, above all, in terms of the personalities, the developmental foibles, the critical warp and woof of the texture of the psychologist's mind [...] The psychology of religion is at the present time simply a series of efforts to observe, describe, and interpret certain classes of religious experiences that happen to have met all the above mentioned criteria of interest and relevance, and the empirically oriented student must enrich the areas covered, and polish the tools used, to secure a wider array of better-authenticated data relevant to the goal of understanding.¹⁰

If Gardner Murphy's evaluation was accurate, and I believed it was, then it seemed logical to me that if the psychology of religion was "biased in terms of the kinds of psychology available at the time and place the studies were made", why could not some attempt be made to determine whether the orientation, philosophy and basic methodology of Humanistic psychology could be brought to bear on the specific problems that interested me? My principal concern was to discover a viable approach within psychology to somehow get at the underlying psychological dynamics of primary religious

¹⁰ Gardner Murphy, "A Note on Method in the Psychology of Religion", in The New Shape in Pastoral Theology, William B. Oglesby, Jr., ed., Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1969, p. 91.

experience in a way that might significantly contribute to pushing forward the frontiers of scientific knowledge in this area. However, the highly subjective and unique character of personal religious experience together with the problems involved in developing an acceptable scientific approach to such material seemed to me to present a kind of obstacle to further development.

Moreover, I was simply not interested in a kind of superficial interpretation of religious experience using psychological categories which had little or no intrinsic connection with the dynamics I wanted to study. Erwin R. Goodenough's sensitivity to problems stemming from his research in the history of religions made him equally sensitive to the pitfalls involved in this wrenching of the religious experience to fit some pre-conceived psychological model.

To appraise the great body of religious data will demand that one rethink much of psychology, as one would have to do if faced with any other large body of unconsidered data. The business of the "psychology of religion" is not to fit religious experiences into the pigeonholes of Freud or Jung or into the categories of Gestalt or stimulus-response or any other, but rather to see what the data of religious experiences themselves suggest.¹¹

Such rethinking of psychology, did not necessarily imply rejection of significant approaches and methods that

¹¹ E. R. Goodenough, The Psychology of Religious Experience, New York, Basic Books, 1965, p. xi.

have been used in the past, but rather a further broadening of psychological orientation toward religious phenomena to include some of the hitherto ignored aspects of such experience. Frequently enough, it has seemed to me, important elements within the experience of religion were bypassed simply because study of them could not conveniently be fitted into the empiricist approach which excluded much subjective data because it eluded the kinds of measurement then in vogue or considered to be scientific. The a-priorisms implicit within an attitude that pre-determined what would constitute hard data were simply unfaithful to the experience being studied. Goodenough, in being open to this fact and wanting to let religious experience speak for itself, showed that he was really open to the pluralistic tradition William James originally had espoused as crucial to the psychological investigation of religion. Dr. Orlo Strunk, Jr. notes that:

... the Varieties demonstrated in a dramatic way the necessity of a liberal view of methodology. At this historic period in the history of psychological science, the experimental method was considered the only valid scientific approach. Psychologists were determined to make their discipline experimental at any cost. James reminded these experimentalists that they dare not do an injustice to the problems by insisting on only one method. It was not that James was against the experimental laboratory. On the contrary there is evidence to show that James established one of the first psychological laboratories in the world. But he did extend his methods to include clinical material and especially personal documents such as autobiographies, diaries, and letters. Even today this liberal view of methodology remains an essential part of the psychology of religion.¹²

As I recalled my reading in Humanistic psychology over the last ten years, it seemed that here there might be a definite key to unlock some of the problems confronting me. The preoccupations and concerns of the humanists were centered on many aspects of subjective experience which I felt were central to religion.

The Articles of Association of the Association for Humanistic Psychology summarized the phenomenological-existential orientation of the Third Force in a way that both distinguished it from more traditional psychologies as well as highlighting those subjective aspects of human experience which constituted the proper object of this recently developed approach.

¹² Orlo Strunk, Jr., Mature Religion: A Psychological Study, New York, Abingdon Press, 1965, p. 76.

Humanistic Psychology may be defined as the third main branch of the general field of Psychology (the two already in existence being the psychoanalytical and the behavioristic) and as such, is primarily concerned with those human capacities and potentialities that have no systematic place either in positivistic or behavioristic theory or in classical psychoanalytic theory, e.g., creativity, love, self, growth, organism, being, becoming, spontaneity, play, humor, affection, naturalness, warmth, ego-transcendence, objectivity, autonomy, responsibility, psychological health, and related concepts. This approach can also be characterized by the writings of Goldstein, Fromm, Horney, Rogers, Maslow, Allport, Angyal, Buhler, Moustakas, etc., as well as by certain aspects of the writings of Jung, Adler, and the psychoanalytic ego-psychologists, existential and phenomenological psychologists.¹³

The interest in ego-transcendence, the dynamics of creativity, self-development, love and above all psychological health are all integral to the fuller development of our understanding of religion. Without denying the important contributions of older more traditional orientations in psychology, it seemed to me that within Third Force psychology we had another tool, another way to approach and study this significant human phenomenon. If such an approach were sufficiently developed it might yield new questions, new data, and a renewal which the psychological study of religion badly needed. This was especially true in view of the critical appraisal of graduate education in religion in North America which states that the psychology of religion has "languished"

¹³ "American Association for Humanistic Psychology, Articles of Association", Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1962, p. 96.

except in its relation to counseling and therapy.¹⁴

It was clear to me that the Humanists were definitely interested in problems of religion. They were also very much concerned with the question of subjective experience and the difficulties involved in scientifically evaluating the unique and somewhat disorganized, but extremely rich data, flowing from every act of self-disclosure. Even before the appearance of Humanistic psychology as a definite force in North America, Gordon Allport, Kurt Goldstein and others had continuously underlined the need for an idiographic approach in psychology. Abraham Maslow, one of the seminal thinkers and writers in Third Force psychology even went so far as to say that:

If the study of the uniqueness of the individual does not fit into what we know of science, then so much the worse for that conception of science. It, too, will have to endure re-creation.¹⁵

The difficult problems involved in entering another person's world of meaning without pre-judging it or moulding it to fit pre-conceived categories were definitely being worked with at both a theoretical and practical level by the

14 The remark is contained in the Report of the American Council of Learned Societies Study titled: Graduate Education in Religion: A Critical Appraisal. The Report will eventually be published.

15 Abraham H. Maslow, Toward A Psychology of Being, Princeton, Van Nostrand, 1962, p. 13.

Humanists. Moreover, the implications of this more idio-graphic approach for the study of religion were not missed by Third Force psychologists who were already beginning to speculate about the possibility of initiating serious study into the nature of religious experience.

A humanistic psychology of religion would not lose Tillich's depth dimension; it would not lose the heart of that which is religious in the name of ease of observation and measurement. In short, contrary to the present dominant positivistic Zeitgeist, the humanistic psychological study of religion would deal in whatever way it could with the subjective meaning of life--with that which is existentially valid [...]. The traditional scientific approach to the psychological study of religion, one of the most important and ubiquitous characteristics of mankind, has not yet penetrated very deeply. It seems to me that the humanistic approach is more likely to probe the "inner man" because of its greater willingness to deal with the fullness of subjective experience via an all-encompassing phenomenology as opposed to a narrow, albeit more rigorous, empiricism.¹⁶

As I re-read pertinent selections from the Journal of Humanistic Psychology and other Third Force literature with which I was familiar at that time, I again recalled Gordon Allport's statement that men closely resemble one another in respect to certain basic biological functions but that in the higher reaches of personality, uniqueness of organization became more apparent. His conclusion that religion functioned at the apex of uniqueness in the personality made the attempt

¹⁶ Joseph R. Royce, "Metaphoric Knowledge and Humanistic Psychology", in Challenges of Humanistic Psychology, James F. T. Bugental, ed., New York, McGraw-Hill, 1967, p. 26-27.

at some form of easy reductionism as an accurate scientific mode of evaluation even more absurd. Once all was said and done and the person was neatly categorized, what kind of real knowledge was produced? It all reminded me of Abraham Maslow's description of rubricizing which he termed:

... a cheap form of cognizing, i.e., really a form of not-cognizing, a quick, easy cataloguing whose function is to make unnecessary the effort required by more careful, idiographic perceiving or thinking. To place a person in a system takes less energy than to know him in his own right, since in the former instance, all that has to be perceived is that one abstracted characteristic which indicates his belongingness in a class, e.g., babies, waiters, Swedes, schizophrenics, females, generals, nurses, etc. What is stressed in rubricizing is the category in which the person belongs, of which he is a sample, not the person as such--similarities rather than differences.¹⁷

Here again, Maslow, like many others was only voicing the same basic sensitivity and approach which William James had tried to establish as early as 1902 in The Varieties of Religious Experience. However, his original spirit and insight had somehow gotten lost in the intervening years as various schools of psychology fought out their intra-mural battles, largely at the expense of the raw data they professed to be investigating. James had communicated his thought humorously but pointedly when writing that:

17 Abraham H. Maslow, Op. Cit., p. 119-120.

The first thing the intellect does with an object is to class it with something else. But any object that is infinitely important to us and awakens our devotion feels to us also as if it must be sui generis and unique. Probably a crab would be filled with a sense of personal outrage if it could hear us class it without ado or apology as a crustacean, and thus dispose of it. "I am no such thing," it would say: "I am myself, myself alone."¹⁸

I could not help but say Amen! to such a passionate plea for the recognition of and respect for unique existence. But at the same time I realized the immense amount of effort needed to support this more idiographic mode of scientific perception. It was no idle thing that Maslow had said about the expenditure of energy required to see in this more holistic way.

As soon as one discarded the manner of cheap cognizing which supported the rubricist mentality, it soon became evident that not only did the scientist have to stop abstracting certain qualities from an individual, but he also had to firmly control a tendency to consider the person apart from the setting and environment to which he belonged. It seemed to me that a way had to be found to sufficiently broaden the psychological approach to include as the integral object of investigation the whole person insofar as they were responding to and part of a given environment. A discrete entity

¹⁸ William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Mentor Books, New York, New American Library, 1958, p. 26.

could not be cut apart from reality and placed under the microscope. Rather, the subject-matter of investigation had to be the entire organism-environment-field.¹⁹ When psychologists of religion cut the subject of research, or some abstracted aspect of the person out of its natural setting, they tended to ignore what Gardner Murphy has aptly called "the ecology of religious experience".²⁰

Such developments, it seemed to me, bore profound implications for the future of exact scientific research. What would be the subject-matter of investigation when one could no longer arbitrarily sever a particular atom of reality from its environment in order to study it in isolation? How did one deal with the rather nebulous, undefined character of a field of force, a whirlpool in the stream, an organism-environment where crisp, clearly defined edges merged with everything else around them? What were the characteristics of that kind of strict scientific investigation, especially in psychology, which could handle such seemingly diffuse subject-matter and say something significant enough

19 The term organism-environment is fundamental to Gestalt therapy. A good description is found in Vol. II, Part 1 of the following work: Frederick Perls, Ralph F. Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality, Delta Books, New York, DeII, 1965.

20 Gardner Murphy, Op. Cit., p. 95.

that it advanced the frontiers of knowledge without simply degenerating into the vague, incoherent ramblings of a pseudomystic who, in the last analysis, was neither in contact with his subject matter nor himself?

Furthermore, was it really possible to isolate the experimenter and his own feelings and involvement with the subject of research? Perhaps a certain type of objectivity might be possible when dealing with microbes and atomic particles--but what happened when there was a degree of involvement between experimenter and client? Was experimenter bias something to be rigorously excluded as a factor contaminating the objectivity of research conclusions, or was it perhaps an integral part of the entire field being investigated and therefore had to be figured in as significant data? These were questions that at the time I was not prepared to answer. Yet, they seemed important for my own future research into the underlying psychological dynamics of religious experience.

It was at this point in my development that a significant event occurred within the Association for Humanistic Psychology. In 1966 I had attended an important seminar titled Humanistic Theology conducted by Father William McNamara, the head of the Inter-Faith Spiritual Life Institute at Sedona, Arizona. The Seminar was held at the Hot Springs, Big Sur, California, and co-sponsored by the Esalen

Institute. Several members of the Board of editors of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology attended this meeting-- although, I was unaware of the implications at that time. Dr. Abraham Maslow who was conducting another seminar at Esalen concurrent with our own, joined our group one morning and made a fruitful contribution to our discussion.

Following this meeting, Anthony Sutich, then the founder and editor of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology began to realize, in his words, that "the new Humanistic Psychology was already overlapping and had become mistakenly identified with another emerging force in psychology".²¹ Subsequent correspondence with Dr. Maslow, Sir Julian Huxley and other contributors to the Humanistic field further strengthened his conviction. Sutich described the evolution that had taken place in an article in the first issue of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology published in the Spring of 1969.

Within less than a decade Humanistic Psychology became an integral part of the general field of psychology with an assured future. However, the reality of rapid development also made it unmistakably clear that the extension of Humanistic Psychology, incalculable as it seemed to be, was accompanied by the emergence of certain possibilities not explicitly accounted for in the original definition. The new possibilities were directly related to what Dr. Maslow among others has called "end-states".²²

21 Anthony J. Sutich, "Some Considerations Regarding Transpersonal Psychology", in The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1969, p. 13.

22 Ibid., p. 15.

The Articles of Association for the emerging science and its possibilities were formulated in the new journal as follows:

Transpersonal Psychology is the title given to an emerging force in the psychology field by a group of psychologists (professional and non-professional) and professional and non-professional men and women from other fields who are interested in ultimate human capacities and potentialities. The emerging transpersonal psychology is concerned specifically with the empirical scientific study and responsible implementation of the findings relevant to: spiritual paths, becoming, meta needs (individual and species-wide), ultimate values, unitive consciousness, peak experiences, B-values, compassion, ecstasy, mystical experience, awe, being, self-actualization, essence, bliss, wonder, ultimate meaning, transcendence of the self, spirit, oneness, cosmic awareness, individual and species-wide synergy, theories and practices of meditation, sacralization of everyday life, transcendental phenomena, cosmic self-humor and playfulness: and related concepts, experiences and activities.²³

With the appearance of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology I felt a mounting excitement within myself because it was immediately evident that the subject matter under investigation related directly to my own interest in probing the depths of primary religious experience. There was concern with various altered states of consciousness and the shifts in perceptual constancies which seemed to appear as individuals moved toward the more unitive awareness and expansion of the sense of self that characterized much primary religious experience.

²³ Articles of Association for the Association for Transpersonal Psychology as quoted in the Newsletter for the Association for Humanistic Psychology, Vol. 8, No. 5, April 1972, p. 21.

Mindful of Abraham Maslow's admonition to "keep it empirical", Dr. Sutich had produced a journal which carefully tried to isolate and describe significant material concerning states of subjective awareness and being that had begun to emerge as a part of the Humanistic orientation. As succeeding issues of the journal appeared, it was clear that the editors were gaining a surer grasp of their subject matter and their selection of articles showed concern for solid empirical foundations as they approached the awesome mystery of those higher states of subjective experience, inevitably connected with religion, which had been known to mankind since the beginning of recorded history--and most probably long before that.

I again found that I could draw an immediate link between interests manifested in this new transpersonal literature and a significant statement made by William James in his conclusion to The Varieties of Religious Experience. Here James had written something which at the time I read it came closer than anything else I had seen to highlighting the subject area of investigation I wanted to be able to get into in my research. Moreover, what he said served as a kind of historical prelude in the psychology of religion for the particular line of research I wanted to pursue in my own project. James had written:

Disregarding the over-beliefs, and confining ourselves to what is common and generic, we have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is literally and objectively true as far as it goes. (Emphasis James')²⁴

Always cautious in his empirically based statements, James here opened a significant door to subsequent research. What was the quality of consciousness of this wider self? What triggers brought it into awareness? What was the nature of the continuity between the conscious self and this wider self? Finally, what elements might be discerned in this saving experience that were important for any comprehensive study of religion which went beyond using overbeliefs to conceptually explain the salvific effects of certain experiences? In other words, were there any acceptable, verifiable psychological dynamics which underlay the various overbelief explanations for saving experience?

Answers to these early questions were not to come easily. The initial search, however, led to a third area of major influence which I have already indicated--a graduate seminar on Mysticism and Psychology that I taught one Fall semester a few years ago.

24 William James, Op. Cit., p. 388.

c) The Seminar on Mysticism and Psychology

What initially led me to conduct the seminar was my desire to become better acquainted with literature and research in this area. I felt an important insight lay in William James' statement that "... personal religious experience has its root and centre in mystical states of consciousness".²⁵ Such heightened forms of awareness, it seemed to me, represented perhaps the most intense expression of primary religious experience available to man. They had also been studied considerably, and I hoped that the literature might yield some clues to guide me in my own attempt to understand the psychological dynamics of religious consciousness.

As the seminar unfolded, a growing realization began to dawn on me. At first it was only a hunch, a possible way of approaching the psychological study of primary religious experience. I toyed with it in the following manner: since the intense form of religious experience termed mysticism occurred in certain individuals, it was most probably a property of the race as a whole. The various mystic ways which were part of every major religion seemed to indicate that this was true. With proper effort at disposing oneself, the gifted reward of these higher, intense levels of religious

25 Ibid., p. 292.

awareness became more readily available to any serious seeker who took the time and made the effort to prepare himself for them.

My next question was whether there might exist some kind of continuum of religious awareness that culminated at one end of a spectrum in the higher, more extreme states of mystical and unitive consciousness, but was also operative throughout the entire range of ordinary human experience. I did not like to use the word continuum because it had connotations of a kind of linear development where a person left one stage behind as he advanced to the next. To my way of thinking, the earlier stages of development were not left behind but rather carried within the individual as he progressed along what has been termed the mystic way.

I suppose that the fundamental question gnawing for some kind of answer was my hunch, after over a decade of pastoral work, that mystical experience was not something that happened exclusively at higher levels of awareness. Rather, my experience seemed to indicate that the term mysticism referred to a wide range of experiences, available to every human being, at whatever level of awareness he happened to be. It seemed to me to be a term used to describe a significant advance in consciousness together with the characteristics of elation, unitive experience, wonder, ineffability, etc. associated with it. It mattered little whether the

actual content of the experience was that of a child's full-focused fascination with a colorful mobile floating in the air above his crib, a young man's first experience of love, or a Buddhist monk achieving satori upon hearing the splashing of water in a stream he may have walked beside every day for years.

Even though the term, mysticism was drawn from descriptions of higher and more advanced states of awareness, it seemed to me that many of the characteristics and dynamics involved at these levels were also present within lesser, but equally profound experiences, of significant learning, creativity, peak moments of existence, etc. There seemed to be a progression, or intensification in levels of awareness of basically the same thing.

I was obviously groping for words, but I instinctively felt that to restrict so-called mystical states of consciousness to something that suddenly appeared at higher levels of awareness, was a direct denial of the developmental character of human consciousness. It seemed to me that these higher states, especially if they were significant enough to make any positive contribution to human growth and evolution, had to have some solid foundation of the same sort as themselves. This foundation might manifest itself in different ways at so-called lower levels of awareness, but the reality which one might investigate at less developed levels would be

essentially the same mystical experience as it was spread out along a continuum of gradual progression and intensification (in the sense that earlier stages were not left behind but caught up within the higher levels of awareness).

The research and thought of Marghanita Laski, Abraham Maslow, Evelyn Underhill, John Dewey, William James, Lawrence LeShan and others seemed to indicate that the existence of just such an understanding of mystical experience was solidly founded.

I reasoned that if I could isolate what were generally accepted as basic characteristics of the more intense forms of mystical experience, and then trace them back to their appearance at earlier levels, I might be able to get at their counterparts within the range of more ordinary human awareness and response. Studying the dynamics of these more accessible experiences might then shed further light on the nature of both higher as well as more ordinary mystical states.

Hopefully, the accepted characteristics of the more intense forms of primary religious experience would give me some kind of criteria for determining what precise subjective experiences it would be most fruitful for the psychologist of religion to examine further down the line within the range of ordinary, everyday awareness. It seemed practically impossible to catch the true mystic in a moment of intense experience. I also felt that each person's overbelief interpretation of

lesser religious experiences often clouded the issue of what was actually happening to them organismically. If I could sufficiently isolate and get at the more generalized experience that somehow provided a foundation for various over-belief interpretations, I felt I might be able to determine some of the actual, psychological dynamics that made up the warp and woof of primary religious experience.

My reading in Humanistic-Transpersonal literature and study of personal accounts drawn from therapy sessions made me wonder whether the evidence of personality reorganization and significant behavior changes which were recorded in these instances might provide important clues for understanding some of the psychological dynamics at work on higher levels of awareness.

Gordon Allport had closed his classic study on The Individual and His Religion by concluding that:

A man's religion is the audacious bid he makes to bind himself to creation and to the Creator. It is his ultimate attempt to enlarge and to complete his own personality by finding the supreme context in which he rightly belongs.²⁶

What initially struck me about these lines was the attempt "to enlarge and to complete" the personality. I caught overtones here of the theme of a "wider self" that William James had touched on in his own conclusion to The Varieties of

26 Gordon W. Allport, Op. Cit., p. 161.

Religious Experience.

In her classic work on Mysticism Evelyn Underhill lay great stress on the dynamics of self-development that took place as the mystic awoke to the realities of transcendental consciousness. She connected the awakening to a wider sense of self with the phenomenon of conversion and described the transformation as "... a disturbance of the equilibrium of the self, which results in the shifting of the field of consciousness from lower to higher levels".²⁷ Quoting Starbuck, she further described the experience of conversion in these instances as "... the larger world-consciousness now pressing in on the individual consciousness".²⁸ It was a situation in which "... the person emerges from a smaller limited world of existence into a larger world of being. His life becomes swallowed up in a larger whole".²⁹ Finally, the principal dynamics were summed up as a "... remaking of the field of consciousness, an alteration in the self's attitude to the world".³⁰

27 Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, New York, Dutton, 1961, p. 176.

28 Edwin Diller Starbuck, The Psychology of Religion, London, W. Scott, 1899, cap. xii, as quoted in Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, p. 177.

29 Ibid., as quoted in Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 177.

30 Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 177.

What struck me about much of the material from Evelyn Underhill was the important role which a radical shift in perception played in the more intense forms of mystical experience. It seemed to me that possibly this might be an important element to be on the lookout for in my investigation. I then wondered if there were any particular aspects of the perception shift that would be significant as a kind of constant in more significant and lasting religious experiences.

I recalled my discussion with Michael Murphy, the founder and president of Esalen Institute during the seminar on Humanistic Theology. At that time he briefly touched on his interest in the human potentialities movement as basically a form of education for transcendence. In the center at Big Sur he had encouraged an eclectic approach to altering states of consciousness by drawing on various disciplines and traditions in religion, psychotherapy, and self-actualization processes whose specific aim was some form of transcendent experience. He subsequently described the common link in his varied approach as follows:

All of these disciplines--whether explicitly seeking transcendence or not--share certain salient features. They all focus attention upon unfamiliar aspects or possibilities of one's world; they all attempt to break perceptual constancies; they all require surrender at crucial moments to alien and formerly resisted perceptions or feelings; they all engender increased vitality and joy and a greater sense of meaning, freedom and power when their practice is successful. Common to the practitioners of all of them is the sense that a fuller reality has made itself known, that something more has entered one's being, that a grace has been bestowed. In T-groups, sensory awakening sessions, psychodramas and Gestalt Therapy, as well as in prayer or meditation, personal boundaries expand--often in ecstasy. This feeling of being entered--or entering upon--something greater is at the heart of the sense of transcendence.³¹

The "expansion of personal boundaries" seemed to fit with Gordon Allport's description of the attempt "to enlarge and complete the personality" and paralleled William James's isolation of the sense of a "wider self" as constituting significant material for the study of personal religious experience. I wondered whether or not there was a constant in this expansion of the sense of self, and if so, what its significance might be.

Drs. Walter N. Pahnke and William A. Richards had approached their investigation of mystical consciousness through research into the psychedelic experience. The expansion of personal boundaries and shifts in perceptual

³¹ Michael H. Murphy, "Education for Transcendence", in The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1969, p. 21.

patterns which could be recorded in certain controlled settings were, they felt, a valid way of getting at some of the more fundamental psychological dynamics that might be operative in non-drug induced religious experiences. Their conclusions were directly relevant to my own interest and provided me with another link in what I was beginning to suspect might be a significant pattern.

Experience of an undifferentiated unity, we suggest, is the hallmark of mystical consciousness. Such unity may be either internal or external, depending upon whether the subject-object dichotomy transcended is between the usual self and the "inner world" within the experiencer, or whether it is between the usual self and the external world of sense impressions outside the experiencer. Both forms of unity are known to occur within the same person, even in the same psychedelic session. Although each form of unity occurs in a different manner, the states of consciousness ultimately experienced may be identical.³²

I found the so-called unity experience described as central to mystical awareness in nearly every classical and contemporary analysis of these altered states of consciousness. There was obviously some kind of relation between the expansion of personal boundaries, the experience of unity and the shift in perceptual constancies which accompanied these inner transformations.

³² Walter N. Pahnke and William A. Richards, "Implications of LSD and Experimental Mysticism", in Altered States of Consciousness, A Book of Readings edited by Charles T. Tart, New York, Wiley, 1969, p. 401.

The expansion of boundaries and heightened sense for unity appeared to me to be two aspects of the same experience looked at from slightly different perspectives, while the shift in perceptual constancies seemed to function as a key factor in the process of expansion and unification. I still was not sure of the precise role of this shift in perception but my reading indicated that it was nearly always present as a sort of constant. I began to wonder whether it might not be the crucial catalyst which served to move a person beyond his more or less rigid self-structure and rigidly patterned perception of reality. If this were so, I felt a study of theories attempting to explain this perception shift would be important for my examination of primary religious experience.

It may seem strange that I would choose to include a statement about mysticism derived from psychedelic research. One reason that prompted me to give serious attention to this type of investigation was a rather surprising statement made by Walter Houston Clark, a thoughtful scholar of religion. In one of his later studies titled Chemical Ecstasy--Psychedelic Drugs and Religion, Dr. Clark had written:

I am not a pharmacologist but a psychologist of religion. Neither am I a mystic, but a scholar of religion and a believer in the importance of mysticism [...] Most of what I have learned about religion at first hand I have learned from my encounter with the psychedelics. I speak advisedly, deliberately and thoughtfully. As a scholar, I have learned at least as much, though not more, from my six "trips" as I have from all the plodding study in my field of the psychology of religion. The two are differing roads which complement one another.³³

My growing familiarity with the contribution of Dr. Clark to the psychological study of religion precluded lightly brushing such a statement aside. Moreover, I recalled a taped lecture of Aldous Huxley's titled "Visionary Experience",³⁴ in which he recounted some of William James' experiences with nitrous oxide and the heated controversy this had raised among serious scholars. Surprisingly enough, however, it was Henri Bergson, the great French philosopher, who came to James's defense with the remark that perhaps nitrous oxide was not the cause but the occasion of his visions. Serious scientific investigation, therefore, could not fail to consider the potential contribution of such seemingly unorthodox means to achieve the higher levels of awareness usually

³³ Walter Houston Clark, Chemical Ecstasy: Psychedelic Drugs and Religion, New York, Sheed & Ward, 1969, p. 155.

³⁴ The recording is LP-102, "Visionary Experience", by Aldous Huxley, available from Big Sur Recordings, 117-a Mitchell Blvd., San Rafael, Calif. 94903, U.S.A.

associated with intense religious consciousness. As one author put it, "It is the quality of the result that is to be judged and not the physical or psychological processes by which it is obtained".³⁵

This stress on quality, however, raised another important issue. Evelyn Underhill had touched on it during her discussion of the dynamics of development at work in the mystic experience.

The mystic life, therefore, involves the emergence from deep levels of man's transcendental self; its capture of the field of consciousness; and the "conversion" or rearrangement of his feeling, thought, and will--his character--about this new centre of life.³⁶

William James had commented on this same rearrangement of personality in his lengthy chapter on Saintliness in The Varieties of Religious Experience. A person's character, together with the attitudes toward self and the world which expressed it were, in James' words, "... always a resultant of two sets of forces within us, impulses pushing us one way and obstructions and inhibitions holding us back. 'Yes! yes!' say the impulses; 'No! no!' say the inhibitions".³⁷

³⁵ G. Stephen Spinks, Psychology and Religion, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967, p. 173.

³⁶ Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 68.

³⁷ William James, Op. Cit., p. 208.

For James, the shift in character and rearrangement of personality which took place following true conversion tended to move the person in the direction of a much more positive and open kind of life where he could tap into the spiritual energy resources--the Yes! yes! impulses of growth. He described the direction taken and ensuing experiences and attitudes as follows:

The saintly character is the character for which spiritual emotions are the habitual centre of the personal energy; and there is a certain composite photograph of universal saintliness, the same in all religions, of which the features can easily be traced.

They are these:--

1. A feeling of being in a wider life than that of this world's selfish little interests; and a conviction, not merely intellectual, but as it were sensible, of the existence of an Ideal Power. In Christian saintliness this power is always personified as God; but abstract moral ideals, civic or patriotic utopias, or inner visions of holiness or right may also be felt as the true lords and enlargers of our life [...]

2. A sense of the friendly continuity of the ideal power with our own life, and a willing self-surrender to its control.

3. An immense elation and freedom, as the outlines of the confining selfhood melt down.

4. A shifting of the emotional centre towards loving and harmonious affections, towards 'yes, yes,' and away from 'no,' where the claims of the non-ego are concerned.³⁸

As I became more familiar with classic authors' descriptions of the life led by saintly persons and the character transformations resulting from the direction and impulses

38 Ibid., p. 216-217.

they had chosen to follow, the more it appeared that I could detect a pattern. It seemed that the psychological dynamics at work in those instances where genuine human growth resulted from development of so-called spiritual capacities were practically the same as those described by Carl Rogers in his description of the fully functioning person. The sense of freedom, trust, self-surrender and increased openness to a wider life highlighted by James were paralleled almost word for word by Rogers' more psychological description of the inner dynamics at work in the process of functioning more fully.

It appears that the person who is psychologically free moves in the direction of becoming a more fully functioning person. He is more able to live fully in and with each and all of his feelings and reactions. He makes increasing use of all his organic equipment to sense, as accurately as possible, the existential situation within and without. He makes use of all of the information his nervous system can thus supply, using it in awareness, but recognizing that his total organism may be, and often is, wiser than his awareness. He is more able to permit his total organism to function freely in all its complexity in selecting, from the multitude of possibilities, that behavior which in this moment of time will be most generally and genuinely satisfying. He is able to put more trust in his organism in this functioning, not because it is infallible, but because he can be fully open to the consequences of each of his actions and correct them if they prove to be less than satisfying.

He is more able to experience all of his feelings, and is less afraid of any of his feelings; he is his own sifter of evidence, and is more open to evidence from all sources; he is completely engaged in the process of being and becoming himself, and thus discovers that he is soundly and realistically social; he lives more completely in this moment, but learns that this is the soundest living for all time. He is becoming a more fully functioning organism, and because of the awareness of himself which flows freely in and through his experience, he is becoming a more fully functioning person.³⁹

For Rogers, the Ideal Power does not exist as something distinct from the person. Rather this power is actualized as the individual grows to trust in the innate striving and right direction of his own organism. The wider life for Rogers is really actualized in the more complete life, the more fully functioning life, the life wherein a person taps into and celebrates by living the intrinsic, positive potential of his own organism.

However, it seemed to me that William James would have agreed with the approach taken by Rogers, because even though James saw the Ideal Power as being larger than the individual, he nonetheless agreed that a person could tap into it only to the extent that he tapped into and identified with his own positive potential.

³⁹ Carl R. Rogers, On Becoming a Person, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1961, p. 191-192.

... man identifies his real being with the germinal higher part of himself; and does so in the following way. He becomes conscious that this higher part is conterminous and continuous with a MORE of the same quality, which is operative in the universe outside of him, and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck. (Emphasis James')⁴⁰

What struck me so forcibly in my reading was that Carl Rogers seemed to be working out the psychological dynamics of the process whereby the "germinal higher self" which James characterized as "continuous with the MORE" was actualized within the person. It seemed to me that the fully functioning person in Rogers' terms was James' MORE as it was gradually actualized within the individual.

One of the attributes of saintliness has always been communion with God, the Absolute or some Higher, Ideal Power, More, All, Beyond, etc. If my simultaneous consideration and attempted integration of James and Rogers was correct, it appeared that possibly a more detailed study of the dynamics which Rogers described as operative in the development of the fully functioning person might yield valuable insight into the nature of primary religious experience.

Moreover, since my concern was with the growth-filled, healthy, integrating character transformations associated with religious experience, I felt that I could probably use the

40 William James, Op. Cit., p. 384.

phrase the fully functioning person as a way of identifying these more positive self-actualizing aspects of religious experience which I wished to study.

However, a major difficulty was connected with this orientation. It was obvious that many vision-filled and otherwise extraordinary religious experiences did not result in the kind of positive character transformation which Miss Underhill and William James both considered central to the true mystic experience.

Was there any significance to the fact that some mystic experiences seemed to support an individual's movement toward becoming a more fully functioning person, whereas other experiences were merely passing moments of little importance that did not significantly affect the process of self-realization? Miss Underhill showed her awareness that not all extraordinary, vision-filled experiences necessarily resulted in the kind of character transformation or saintliness which I had chosen to describe psychologically with Carl Rogers' reflections on the fully functioning person. Discussing this precise problem, she wrote that:

The difficulty lies in determining the point at which supersensual experience ceases to be merely a practical and interesting extension of sensual experience--an enlarging, so to speak, of the boundaries of existence--and passes over into that boundless life where Subject and Object, desirous and desired, are one. (Emphasis Miss Underhill's)⁴¹

41 Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 72.

By making the distinction between an "interesting extension of sensual experience" and the experience of unity where "Subject and Object are one", Miss Underhill seemed to be not only voicing her awareness of the problem but also focusing attention on a central experience that was connected with a definite, positive character change (i.e. the unity experience). Her concern to move beyond the "interesting extension of sensual experience" fit well with 'zen' descriptions of makyo that often happened during zazen as the disciple made progress in attaining states of consciousness leading to kensho or satori.

Makyo are the phenomena--visions, hallucinations, fantasies, revelations, illusory sensations--which one practicing zazen is apt to experience at a particular stage in his sitting. [...] These phenomena are not inherently bad. They become a serious obstacle to practice only if one is ignorant of their true nature and is ensnared by them. [...] Very common are visual hallucinations. You are doing zazen with your eyes open when suddenly the ridges of the straw matting in front of you seem to be heaving up and down like waves. Or without warning everything may go white before your eyes, or black. A knot in the wood of a door may suddenly appear as a beast or demon or angel. [...] Never be tempted into thinking that these phenomena are real or that the visions themselves have any meaning. To see a beautiful vision of a Bodhisattva does not mean that you are any nearer becoming one yourself, any more than a dream of being a millionaire means that you are any richer when you awake. Hence there is no reason to feel elated about such makyo.⁴²

⁴² Philip Kapleau, The Three Pillars of Zen, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967, p. 38-41 passim.

Aldous Huxley, like Evelyn Underhill and William James also felt that an authentic mystical experience involved a definite transformation of character that went beyond the experience of interesting visual phenomena, and that if this was not present the experience in question was not truly mystical.

Psychic experiences, which do not contribute to sanctification, are not experiences of God but merely of certain unfamiliar aspects of our psychophysical universe [...] where there is no evidence of sanctification, there is no reason to suppose that the experience has anything to do with God. It is a significant fact that occultism and spiritualism have produced no saints.⁴³

I felt that in focusing attention on the unity experience, one of the many characteristics of mystic experience, Evelyn Underhill had perhaps put her finger on something crucial for my own investigation. As I attempted to formulate my concern in this matter, it seemed that I was searching for some hypotheses that might enable me to determine whether a given mystic experience and the perceptions associated with it actually contributed to the constructive personality change and fuller human functioning of the person having such experiences. The more profound unitive experiences where there was a transcending, to some extent, of the so-called subject-object

⁴³ Aldous Huxley, "Readings in Mysticism", in Vedanta, ed. Christopher Isherwood, London, Allen & Unwin, 1948, p. 376-377 as quoted in G. Stephen Spinks, Psychology and Religion, p. 173.

dichotomy appeared to offer a fruitful area of investigation.

Summary

The preceding pages represent an attempt to recall the genesis of what I consider to be some of my more significant hunches, insights and questions as they emerged over several years. I have briefly tried to sketch a few of the sources that influenced me and, in several instances, even changed the direction of my original inquiry. I have not gone into great detail because much of the material that emerged in this early searching has now become part of the dissertation itself and it would have been pointless to develop it at this early stage. I merely wanted to give enough of the highlights of what happened and the flavor of what fascinated me to indicate questions that emerged to hold my attention and influence the direction I took in subsequent research.

Let me now try to summarize what I consider to be the salient questions and points of reference that stand out in this early period of development. Afterwards I will go on to formulate the central hypothesis of this dissertation and the more formal questions associated with it. I believe that the following eight points spell out the material I wish to highlight.

1. A central question: Is there some kind of basic religious experience common to all men simply because they are evolving human beings?
2. Is there a fundamental, organismic experience of transcendence quite independent of the religious traditions and overbeliefs used to interpret it?
3. Is it possible to have a valid science of purely subjective experience, especially within the extremely individualized area of primary religious experience?
4. Can the orientation, philosophy and basic methodology of Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology contribute constructively to research into the highly subjective area of primary religious experience?
5. A significant point of departure provided by William James in his conclusion to The Varieties of Religious Experience:

Disregarding the over-beliefs, and confining ourselves to what is common and generic, we have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is literally and objectively true as far as it goes. (Emphasis James's)⁴⁴

6. Are there any fruitful hypotheses or theories to explain the process of perception development as it evolves from that associated with ordinary states of consciousness to

44 William James, Op. Cit., p. 388.

culminate at the far end of the spectrum in higher, more intense states of mystical experience?

7. In what way do the expansion of personal boundaries, the experience of unity, and the shift in perceptual constancies interact with one another at the psychological level throughout development of the religious consciousness associated with primary religious experience?
8. What hypotheses are available to help determine whether a given unitive experience and the perceptions associated with it actually contribute to the long-term growth and fuller functioning of the person who has such an experience?

When I initially looked back over these questions and statements I realized that many of them overlapped. It was also clear that each of them, with some modification, could most probably constitute a distinct thesis topic in itself. In one sense, a series of questions like this really belongs at the conclusion of a dissertation as a list of future research projects. However, it seemed to me that there was legitimate reason at the outset to engage in a research project that sought to expose what I considered to be an overriding unity that might bind them all together. I felt this was important because such an initial synthetic effort should provide valuable data and relational links that would be helpful to future researchers who might decide to follow

one of the questions to a more far reaching conclusion than any which I might arrive at in this preliminary endeavor. While going deeper into any one of these questions, if the researcher had a feel for the way his particular area of investigation tied in with others, it might help him gain a valuable sense of perspective and greater openness to the potential contribution of raw data which he uncovered.

2. The Thesis Hypothesis and Related Questions.

a) General Objectives

Since it would obviously be impossible to adequately treat all the questions I raised, I chose to begin with a fundamental question that interested me personally and tied together the three areas of influence I have outlined in these pages--(1) methodology in the psychology of religion; (2) Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology; (3) the research seminar on Mysticism and Psychology.

I formulated my initial hypothesis as follows,

Does Third and Fourth Force Psychology provide new knowledge about primary religious experience which might serve as a basis for an initial formulation of a Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology of Religion?

It then seemed to me that one way to begin answering such a question was first to choose one or two fundamental questions regarding some of the psychological dynamics involved in primary religious experience. The next step would

be to determine whether the philosophy, orientation and evolving methodology of Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology could uncover fresh knowledge, hypotheses and data that would push forward the frontiers of research on these problem areas.

I felt that the best way to formulate a fresh approach to the psychology of religion would be to put the particular orientation in question to work on some actual questions within the field. Instead of working out a theoretical way in which Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology might provide new knowledge for the study of religion, it seemed more realistic to simply choose some problems and see what this orientation in psychology could do with them. If a Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology of religion were possible, it would become evident as real problems were researched from this vantage point.

I therefore chose an area which I felt was central to the psychological study of religion and which, because of the highly subjective nature of the data involved, still needed much serious research. I formulated the problem as two questions, but they are by no means distinct. The first provides data that would normally be uncovered during the process of researching the second. However, I believe that this is significant enough material that aspects of it deserve separate treatment. The second question offers the main problem-context within which I hope to determine whether the

orientation of Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology can offer a significant approach to the study of religious awareness.

- (1) Can Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology contribute any hypotheses to explain some of the psychological dynamics that underly the shift in perception and developing sense of self ordinarily associated with the unitive experiences that characterize more advanced states of primary religious consciousness?
- (2) Can Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology offer any hypotheses to determine whether the unitive dimension of primary religious experience supports an individual in the process of becoming a more fully functioning person?

I believe that these two questions involve many of the elements contained in the more extensive list. Hopefully, the attempt to answer them will open up some potentially fruitful areas of investigation and make available at least some aspects of the Humanistic-Transpersonal orientation to the serious researcher of religious consciousness.

b) The Specific Goals

Unitive Religious Consciousness and the Fully Functioning Person--Congruence vs Simple Deautomatization of Perception

If I were to summarize the principal material of this dissertation, I would try to formulate it in two generalized

statements together with a few additional comments. The first statement is as follows:

- (1) Many unitive perceptions occasioned by contemplative meditation, renunciation and drug usage mimic the perceptual shifts associated with the process of constructive personality change but without this change necessarily occurring. We may speak of this as a simple deautomatization of perception.⁴⁵

I have been led to this conclusion by a number of diverse sources. Evelyn Underhill, for one, returns to the problem again and again in her classic work on Mysticism. So too, in a sense, does W. T. Stace in his study Mysticism and Philosophy.⁴⁶ Spiritual authors in both East and West warn their disciples of the varying degrees of illusion associated with perception changes that occur in those who seriously seek higher levels of enlightenment. The explanations for such makyo may vary, from the influence of the devil to the

45 Deautomatization is a concept stemming from Heinz Hartmann's discussion of the automatization of motor behavior. It has applications within the area of perception as well as behavior. A fuller development of this concept, together with its implications for the study of religious experience, will follow at a later point in the dissertation. The other terms in this initial statement--unitive perception, contemplative meditation, renunciation, drug usage, constructive personality change--will each be explained fully in the context that pertains to them.

46 W. T. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, London, MacMillan, 1961, 349 p.

sudden uprush of subliminal material hidden in the unconscious, but the main point in each instance is the same. There exist definite visions and various alterations in consciousness produced by the effort at transcendence. The problem is to clearly discern which of such experiences indicate healthy actualization of the capacity for transcendence, a sign of the fully functioning person, and which experiences simply represent an unusual shake-up of the normal perceptual field which ultimately has no significant positive influence on subsequent growth patterns.

Evelyn Underhill concluded that the main test to determine whether an altered state of consciousness truly contributed to the growth of an individual lay in what she termed its "life-enhancing quality".⁴⁷ While I definitely agreed with her in principle, I found the phrase still too vague, in that it did not really spell out some of the actual psychological dynamics involved in such life-enhancement.

The search for unitive states of consciousness which actually contributed to growth and fuller human functioning then became a real challenge for me. They obviously happened on certain occasions within the religious setting, but principles for distinguishing them from non-growth-producing

47 Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 270.

experiences were not well worked out.

I recalled Evelyn Underhill's statement in the conclusion of her work that

Every person, then, who awakens to consciousness of a reality which transcends the normal world of sense--however small, weak, imperfect that consciousness may be--is put upon a road which follows at low levels the path which the mystic treads at high levels [...] But if he move at all, he will move through a series of states which are, in their own small way, analogous to those experienced by the greatest contemplative on his journey towards that union with God which is the term of the spirit's ascent towards its home.⁴⁸

If this were true, then it seemed to me one could validly research growth producing unitive experiences at the level of ordinary awareness and by getting at the actual dynamics involved, have something significant to say about the life-enhancing dynamics of more inaccessible states of mystical consciousness. The fundamental commonality of all human consciousness together with its innate laws of growth and development seemed to me to support such a far-reaching hypothesis. Miss Underhill also seemed to point an encouraging finger in this direction when she concluded that:

More and more, as we study and collate all the available evidence, this fact--this law--is borne in on us: that the general movement of human consciousness, when it obeys its innate tendency to transcendence, is always the same. There is only one road from Appearance to Reality.⁴⁹

48 Ibid., p. 445.

49 Ibid., p. 446.

The next problem, of course, was to identify certain unitive states of consciousness which did seem to contribute to an individual's becoming a more "fully functioning person",⁵⁰ and which were accessible within the range of ordinary experience. My findings at this point in my research were leading me to hypothesize that possibly a significant dynamic at work in the growth-producing experience and lacking in those where no positive character transformation was effected, was the development of congruence with the experiencing process. When perceptual shifts and the growth of unitive consciousness stemmed from a growing ability to accept oneself and one's feelings rather than from a simple breakdown or deautomatization of the normal field of perception, even though the vividness of the perceptual experience might be somewhat the same in both cases, nonetheless, it seemed to me that the long-term effects on the positive growth and development of a person were quite different. I therefore formulated my second summary statement as follows:

- (2) The experience of congruence with the experiencing process, as developed by Carl Rogers and Eugene Gendlin, brings its own perceptual shifts and

⁵⁰ The phrase is a technical one used by Carl Rogers to describe the person who is developing a growing degree of congruence--i.e. the ability to be open to and acceptingly aware of his real feelings. The phrase fully functioning person and the term congruence will be developed later in the dissertation.

experience of unification as an individual proceeds along the path of becoming a more fully functioning person. However, these shifts in perception flow out of more profound transformations in the personality and sense of self. They are not merely deautomatizations of perception occasioned by forms of contemplative meditation, renunciation or drug usage that can shake perceptual constancies without necessarily contributing to fuller human functioning.⁵¹

If what I am saying is correct, then it seems to me that further study of the experience of congruence with the experiencing process may offer a significant point of reference for the investigation of primary religious experience and the subjective awareness implicit within it. The role that the concepts of congruence and experiencing play in the work of Carl Rogers, Eugene Gendlin, James Bugental and others who follow the orientation of Third Force psychology is, I feel, indicative of their importance in the study of subjective experience. Moreover, when carried over as a key factor in the investigation of Fourth Force, or Transpersonal psychologists who are more concerned with the nature of transcendent human experience, it seems to me that it may offer

⁵¹ The phrases--congruence with the experiencing process and sense of self--will each be explained fully in the context that pertains to it.

a significant criterion within the religious context for determining whether any given unitive experience truly contributes to the development of a fully functioning person.

I am gradually coming to conclude that perhaps the potentially powerful contribution of a well-developed Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology for the field of religious studies may well lie in its ability to generate fruitful hypotheses to explain an important area of religious life. I refer to the perennial problem of determining the conditions under which religious forms of altering states of consciousness and generating unitive perceptions are connected with vitalizing, positive growth tendencies in the human organism, and when they merely represent alterations of the normal perceptual field brought about through individual exercises or a kind of group involvement that produces unusual shifts in consciousness.

The relevance of and need for research contributions to this complex area of human experience cannot be overstressed. The last five years has witnessed an explosion of growth centers modelled on California's Esalen Institute which are all deeply involved in the techniques and methods of altering states of consciousness. Most of these centers devote a good deal of study and effort to the cultivation of various forms of meditation and religious asceticism, both Eastern and Western, in their attempt to arrive at higher

states of awareness.⁵²

The aspiring devotee of mystical consciousness can choose among a wide variety of approaches. Transcendental meditation following the Maharishi Mahesh, the cult of Krishna Consciousness, various forms of zen, yoga and the more esoteric teachings of men like Gurdjieff and P. D.

Ouspenski⁵³ help fill out a long list of differing ways to higher stages of enlightenment. The drug culture with its striking alterations in perceptual constancies represents still another facet of the seemingly endless variety of approaches to altered states of consciousness. Within the churches themselves, various forms of revivalism, pentacostalism, and the perennial cult of enthusiasm, so aptly described by Ronald Knox,⁵⁴ are all enjoying a kind of renaissance during this period of intense searching.

There can be little doubt that some of the older methods used to attain unitive consciousness have produced

52 A comprehensive work that both explains the various ways of altering states of consciousness and lists the addresses of centers where the different techniques can be practiced and learned is: Severin Peterson, A Catalog of the Ways People Grow, New York, Ballantine Books, 1971, xiii-368 p.

53 P. D. Ouspensky, In Search of the Miraculous, A Harvest Book, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, 1949, xi-399 p.

54 Ronald A. Knox, Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion; with special reference to the 17th & 18th centuries, A Galaxy Book, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1961, 622 p.

positive results in the lives of many who diligently gave themselves to following the way mapped out by some revered spiritual guide. However, it is also obvious that a number of followers go through the motions of the ascetical or contemplative way, and perhaps even enjoy many of the striking perceptual benefits and so-called unitive experiences associated with diligent and persistent practice. But the quality of their lives and especially of their self-images are not profoundly affected by the unusual perceptual experiences that result from their efforts.

It is interesting to note, as we shall in future pages, that even clinical evidence derived from experimentation with lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25) provides significant confirmation of a clear distinction that should be drawn between superficial visual, auditory or other sense aberrations, and more profound unitive experiences that seem to have a significantly greater effect upon the sense of self and positive growth patterns of the individual in question. We will return to discussion of this phenomenon at a later point in the dissertation.

The thesis presentation will indirectly seek to establish the possibility of a Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology of Religion by dealing with the specific problems we have chosen for examination--especially, the conditions under which unitive perceptions associated with advanced states of

primary religious consciousness can contribute to fuller human functioning.

The chapters which follow will deal with this question in the following manner:

Chapter 2 will present an original synthesis of selected literature regarding the fact, nature, and development of that "unitive consciousness" which is the principal characteristic of primary religious awareness.

Chapter 3 will consider various triggers and techniques for deliberately producing unitive consciousness. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the phenomenon known as deautomatization of perception and the three most common ways to achieve it--contemplative meditation, renunciation and drug usage.

Chapter 4 will present the role of congruence and the experiencing process within development toward fuller human functioning. The relationship of this to the evolution of a substantial foundation within the organism for unitive consciousness will be discussed. A critical evaluation of deautomatization in the light of growth toward greater congruence will then be presented.

Chapter 5 will present the research conclusions and outline future projects.

CHAPTER II

RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS AND UNITIVE EXPERIENCE: A COMPOSITE DRAWN FROM SELECTED LITERATURE

The study of primary religious experience inevitably leads toward research into the nature of those subjective states of consciousness which have been characterized as mystical by nearly all religious traditions throughout recorded history. As William James noted, "One may say truly, I think, that personal religious experience has its root and centre in mystical states of consciousness".¹

If we would truly fathom the nature of religious awareness and the quality of perception associated with it, as well as the conditions under which such heightened forms of consciousness might contribute to fuller human functioning, then we will have to spend a little time seeking to better understand what is involved in such mystical states.

Since the literature on mysticism, both theistic and non-theistic, is quite large and for the most part well-documented, it is not my intended purpose to merely repeat what has already been written. I do, however, wish to attempt a somewhat original synthesis of material regarding the essential core of that type of transcendent experience which has

¹ William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Mentor Books, New York, New American Library, 1958, p. 292.

traditionally been characterized as mystical. I am referring, of course, to the kind of unitive perception and consciousness which seems to be a significant hallmark of mystic experience.

The present chapter will seek (1) to establish the fact that unitive consciousness is the core of mystic experience; (2) to present three contemporary explanations of unitive consciousness drawn from non-religious studies that can contribute greatly to our understanding of the human dynamics involved in such heightened states of awareness; and (3) to discuss what appears to be a developmental progression that takes place in unitive states of consciousness. A final section will deal briefly with the question of language used in mystical literature and how the alleged ineffability of mystic experience results from a marked transformation in the sense of self.

1. Unity as the Core Mystic Experience.

A random sampling of authors well qualified to discuss these matters produces near unanimous agreement that some type of unity experience is at the heart of mystical consciousness. W. T. Stace, for example, speaks of it as

... the sense of the unity of all things, the 'unifying vision,' which [...] is not only a characteristic of all mystical experience but is the nuclear and essential characteristic.²

² W. T. Stace, Mysticism and Philosophy, London, MacMillan, 1961, p. 83.

Evelyn Underhill defined mysticism as

... the art of union with Reality. The mystic is a person who has attained that union in greater or less degree; or who aims at and believes in such attainment.³

William James referred to essentially the same point when he wrote that

This overcoming of all the usual barriers between the individual and the Absolute is the great mystic achievement. In mystic states we become one with the Absolute and we become aware of our oneness. This is the everlasting and triumphant mystical tradition hardly altered by differences of clime or creed. In Hinduism, in Neo-Platonism, in Sufism, in Christian mysticism, in Whitmanism, we find the same recurring note, so that there is about mystical utterances an eternal unanimity which ought to make the critic stop and think...⁴

Arthur Diekman, whose research we will have occasion to refer to later, has noted that

Experiencing one's self as one with the universe or with God, is the hallmark of the mystic experience, regardless of its cultural context.⁵

Claudio Naranjo in his recent study on the psychology of meditation linked the contemplative state and mysticism as follows:

³ Evelyn Underhill, Practical Mysticism, New York, E. P. Dutton, 1915, p. 3.

⁴ William James, Op. Cit., p. 321.

⁵ Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", in Psychiatry, Vol. 29, No. 4, 1966a, p. 335.

The perception of unity that characterizes the depth of the meditation state and has been formulated by mystics of all lands [...] is a recognition of oneness in all things and all beings. In monotheistic formulations, all is the expression of one God; in pantheistic renderings of the experience, all is God. In non-theistic mysticism, all is a "substance," a thatness, a beingness transcending its own phenomenal manifestations.⁶

D. T. Suzuki, the well-known exponent of Zen Buddhism wrote that

The individual shell in which my personality is so solidly encased explodes at the moment of satori (the Zen word for the enlightenment experience). Not necessarily that I get united with a greater being than myself or absorbed in it, but my individuality which I found rigidly held together and definitely separate from other individual existences [...] melts away into something indescribable, something which is of a quite different order from what I am accustomed to.⁷

Mrs. Eileen Garrett, the famous sensitive who was the subject of extensive psychical research by numerous scholars in parapsychology during her life, constantly attempted to refine her explanation of the quality of perception present when she operated with clairvoyance or pre-cognition. While Mrs. Garrett cannot be classified as a mystic in the traditionally accepted sense of that word, she did manifest many of the

⁶ Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, On the Psychology of Meditation, New York, Viking, 1971, p. 30-31.

⁷ D. T. Suzuki, Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D. T. Suzuki, ed. by William Barrett, Anchor Books, New York, Doubleday, 1956, p. 105.

paranormal capabilities often exhibited by the mystics.⁸ Mrs. Garrett wrote as follows:

I have an inner feeling of participating, in a very unified way, with what I observe--by which I mean that I have no sense of any subjective-objective dualism, no sense of I and any other, but a close association with, an immersion in, the phenomena. The "phenomena" are therefore not phenomenal while they are in process; it is only after the event that the conscious mind, seeking to understand the experience in its own analytical way, divides up the unity...⁹

In his study of the peak experience as an acute identity experience Abraham Maslow even went so far as to identify the religious aspect of the peak experience with mystical unitive consciousness:

In some reports, particularly of the mystic experience or the religious experience or philosophical experience, the whole of the world is seen as a unity, as a single rich live entity. In other of the peak experiences, most particularly the love experience and the aesthetic experience, one small part of the world is perceived as if it were for the moment all of the world. In both cases the perception is of unity.¹⁰

One might also recall the passage quoted earlier describing the research of Drs. Pahnke and Richards into the psychedelic experience of mystical consciousness.

⁸ Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, New York, Dutton, 1961, p. 293ff.

⁹ E. J. Garrett, Awareness, New York, Creative Age Press, 1943, p. 113, as quoted in Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal by Lawrence LeShan, New York, Parapsychology Foundation, 1969, p. 32.

¹⁰ Abraham H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, Princeton, Van Nostrand, 1962, p. 83.

Experience of an undifferentiated unity, we suggest, is the hallmark of mystical consciousness. Such unity may be either internal or external, depending upon whether the subject-object dichotomy transcended is between the usual self and the "inner world" within the experiencer, or whether it is between the usual self and the external world of sense impressions outside the experiencer. Both forms of unity are known to occur within the same person, even in the same psychedelic session. Although each form of unity occurs in a different manner, the states of consciousness ultimately experienced may be identical.¹¹

The unitive experience in mystic literature is described in a number of ways, the most basic division being made by scholars between what has been termed introvertive and extrovertive mysticism. The senses play a certain role in the latter where there appears to be some sort of more than ordinary experience of union with external reality or what we commonly call the environment (as distinguished from the organism that is sensing and knowing). Introvertive mysticism, on the other hand, implies a movement inward, a cutting off of sensation and what has been described as a non-sense-mediated union with that which is within the organism. However, it is important to realize that despite the theory building of scholars, mystics themselves "... in general do not distinguish between the introvertive One and the extrovertive One".¹²

11 Walter N. Pahnke and William A. Richards, "Implications of LSD and Experimental Mysticism", in Altered States of Consciousness, A Book of Readings edited by Charles T. Tart, New York, Wiley, 1969, p. 401.

12 W. T. Stace, Op. Cit., p. 67.

The division serves as a convenient way for scholars to catalogue various types of experiences which they study. Furthermore, it is most important for classifying the different ways used to achieve unitive experiences. This is especially significant when we discover that some ways depend upon direct use of the senses to achieve the desired unitive consciousness, whereas other methods use various techniques to inhibit sensory activity in order to attain their goals. But it must always be remembered that these arbitrary divisions do not seem to be made by the mystics themselves.

a) Unity and Orthodoxy--The Question of Pantheism

While many unitive experiences that would qualify as mystical contain no specific reference to a deity, accounts of mystical union in the so-called theistic religions (Christianity, Islam, and Judaism) involve unity experiences with a Personal God, the creature with the creator. This raises the inevitable problem of pantheism and the demands of strict orthodoxy for the mystic. After quoting a passage from Henry Suso, W. T. Stace comments on the "merging" or unity experience with a Personal Godhead and the inevitable pantheistic difficulties it entails.

When the spirit by the loss of its self-consciousness has in very truth established its abode in this glorious and dazzling obscurity, it is set free from every obstacle to union, and from its individual properties [...] when it passes away into God [...] in this merging of itself in God the spirit passes away.¹³

We shall find that such phrases as "passing away" and "fading away" are of constant occurrence among the mystics both of Christianity and Islam to express the actual feeling or experience which they have. In the passage just quoted from Suso he speaks quite unqualifiedly of this loss of personal identity. It is true, however, that he immediately adds a qualification. The spirit, he adds, passes away "not wholly; for [...] it does not become God by nature [...]" It is still a something which has been created." This refers to a famous and furious dispute which has raged in all three of the theistic religions as to the proper interpretation to be given to the experience of "passing away" into the Infinite. The orthodox theologians of all three religions vehemently condemn what they call "pantheism," and keep a watchful and threatening eye upon the mystics because of their undoubted tendency to pantheism. Pantheism generally is supposed to mean the identity of God and the world. In the dispute of the theologians and the mystics it usually means the identity of God and that part of the world which is the individual self. The mystics are allowed by the orthodox to claim "union with God," but this union must not be interpreted as "identity," but as something short of actual and absolute identity.¹⁴

This question of proper 'interpretation' invariably becomes a factor in theistic traditions. However, as one

¹³ Henry Suso, *Life of Henry Suso*, trans. by T. F. Knox, Chap. 54, as quoted in W. T. Stace, *Op. Cit.*, p. 113.

¹⁴ W. T. Stace, *Op. Cit.*, p. 113.

becomes more familiar with mystic literature it is almost impossible to avoid the impression that for the believer there appears to be an organismic experience of profound unity, perhaps common to all men of all ages, which is then variously interpreted according to the approved religious and societal norms for judging such experiences. This seems to be the point made earlier by both Marghanita Laski and William James when they employed the term overbelief to characterize such interpretations. Stace's own elaboration supports this position:

Mystical experience is in all cultures usually interpreted by those who have it in terms of the dogmas which constitute their prior set of beliefs. The more naïve Christian mystic simply accepts quite uncritically the idea that what he has experienced is "union with God"--that is, with God as traditionally conceived in his church. Eckhart, a much more sophisticated Christian mystic, interprets the same experience as the undifferentiated unity of the Godhead before its differentiation into the three persons of the Trinity. A Hindu interprets it as union with Brahman or perhaps with the goddess Kali. A Buddhist interprets it in wholly non-theological terms which a Western mind is apt to label as "atheistic."¹⁵

An important contribution from studies in comparative religions for the scholar pursuing studies in Christian mysticism is that a wider familiarity with the more experiential elements of mystic union variously described in both theistic and non-theistic literature may better enable the careful researcher to discern what in the Christian account represents

15 Ibid., p. 74.

actual experience and what is editorializing for the sake of orthodoxy.

... it must be remarked that the mediaeval Catholic mystics--who usually avow their complete submission to the judgment of the Church--when they describe the experience of union are usually careful to disclaim pantheism and to explain that the individual soul does not wholly pass away into God, but remains a distinct entity [...] But it is impossible not to note--perhaps with a certain measure of amusement--that the Catholic mystics frequently make what seem to be unguarded statements which imply complete pantheistic identity, and then hastily add a qualifying clause, as if they had suddenly remembered their ecclesiastical superiors.¹⁶

The following passages from Meister Eckhart can be used to illustrate this point. In the first we have an example of the kind of unguarded statement where all multiplicity and distinction between creature and creator are simply obliterated:

In this way the soul enters into the unity of the Holy Trinity, but it may become even more blessed by going further, to the barren Godhead, of which the Trinity is a revelation. In this barren Godhead activity has ceased and therefore the soul will be most perfect when it is thrown into the desert of the Godhead, where both activity and forms are no more, so that it is sunk and lost in this desert where its identity is destroyed.¹⁷

Such pantheistic statements often provoked the charge of heresy from the church even though in other more carefully worded, and even somewhat calculated passages, Eckhart openly rejected such a pantheistic interpretation.

16 Ibid., p. 114.

17 Meister Eckhart, trans. by R. B. Blakney, New York, Harper, 1941, p. 200-201, as quoted in W. T. Stace, Op. Cit., p. 98.

In this exalted state she (the soul) has lost her proper self and is flowing full-flood into the unity of the divine nature. But what, you may ask, is the fate of this lost soul? Does she find herself or not? [...] It seems to me that [...] though she sink all in the oneness of divinity she never touches bottom. God has left her one little point from which to get back to herself [...] and know herself as creature.¹⁸

The little point remains finite, creaturely, always distinct and hence quite orthodox.

The important conclusion to be drawn from all this is that whether the interpretation is theistic or non-theistic, there does seem to be a solid experiential core of more than ordinary unity that serves as the foundation for various over-belief explanations. It is possible that no one may ever settle the dispute between theists and non-theists over the proper interpretation of mystic phenomena. Faith adds its own dimension to experience. But the actual experience of a more profound unity within oneself and with the world and the so-called Absolute, God, More, All, One, Void, etc. merits more careful consideration.

2. Some Contemporary Explanations of Unitive Consciousness.

Evelyn Underhill once pointed out that mystics are generally not satisfied with what ordinary men call experience. They tend to "deny the world in order that they may find

18 W. T. Stace, Op. Cit., p. 114.

reality".¹⁹ The mystic is concerned with what he considers a basic limitation of the ordinary sense world and various forms of illusion produced by it that screen an individual from more profound union with reality--the ultimate goal of mystical questing.

But what hypothetical explanations are available to explain the nature of that heightened unitive perception of reality where the clear-cut lines of division between subject and object begin to blur and lose the distinctness which characterizes ordinary common-sense awareness?

a) The Sense of Self as Organism-Environment

We might begin by stressing that one important aspect of the shift in perception we are investigating is not only that external reality appears to be somewhat different or that the individual feels that the quality of his relationship to it has changed. Perhaps more fundamental is a profound transformation in what we will call the 'sense of self' that underlies the more obvious changes in relationship and external environment. The individual's awareness of himself seems to shift, especially in the mystic's case, in a decidedly predictable direction. This needs more careful consideration.

19 Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, p. 3.

We use the phrase sense of self rather than self concept in order to emphasize the organic, embodied way of knowing and perceiving which is proper to man. The sense of self includes a cognitive, rational element, but is by no means restricted to it. One's body-image, kinesthetic sensation, intuitions, feeling processes and sense for integration with a larger environment are all part of a sense of self which is much more comprehensive than the rational, reflective aspect.

This does not mean, however, that everybody's sense of self is so clearly defined that they can automatically tune into the finer, non-rational dimension of how they find themselves in the world. In most instances, the basic philosophy or underlying anthropology which conditions most of our ordinary daily perceptions influences us to such an extent that we actually perceive ourselves not as we really are but as our philosophy says we are.

... man as he is described in the modern sciences has little in common with man as he feels himself subjectively. Subjectively, he remains the isolated consciousness, or soul, inhabiting a physical body.²⁰

Whether we realize it nor not, theological images are immensely powerful even when bibles are unread and churches

20 Alan Watts, Beyond Theology: The Art of Godmanship, Meridian Books, New York, The World Publishing Co., 1967, p. 9.

remain unattended. The sensation of one's identity is not simply a biological matter but largely one of social conditioning.

... the way in which men feel their existence subjectively is still very largely determined by theological and mythological images. Greek, Hebrew, and Christian images of man lie at the root of our social institutions--in our laws and the methods of enforcing them, our family structures and the raising of children, our status games, our educational and academic procedures, and, perhaps most important of all, in the very grammar of our languages. The someone, the unique and specific ego, who knows and feels, who responsibly causes actions, who dwells in the body but is not quite of the body, who confronts its experiences as something other, who is the inward controller of thinking and willing--this is assumed in every phase of our culture and in all the practical matters of everyday life.²¹

The way men feel their existence is what is meant by the sense of self. And there is no doubt that this present century has witnessed a radical break with the way man has traditionally experienced himself in the world. This rupture was perhaps best summarized by the French philosopher Merleau-Ponty who

... was asked to present a lecture at the international meeting of philosophers in Geneva in 1951. His topic was: the results of philosophical reflection during the first half of the twentieth century. The denial of dualism of body and soul characterizes, according to Merleau-Ponty, the modern movement of thought.²²

21 Ibid., p. 9-10.

22 Remy Kwant, "The Human Body as the Self-Awareness of Being (An Inquiry into the Last Phase of Merleau-Ponty's Philosophical Life)", in Humanitas, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1966, p. 43.

If this conclusion reached after a long life dedicated to the philosopher's search for ultimate reality gives us cause to pause, we will find even more reason to wonder when reflecting upon a central preoccupation of Merleau-Ponty in the period immediately preceding his death. During this time he seemed to re-evaluate many of the more acceptable philosophical positions which he had formerly held. Remy Kwant, inquired into the last phase of Merleau-Ponty's philosophical life, and noted that throughout this period ,

It is clear that Merleau-Ponty does not deny any of his former perspectives. He maintains that the body is a subject and that it is a dialectic interchange with the world. He maintains also that the body is adapted to the world, that it is a "logic of the world." But in the last period of his life he tries to transcend the dualism which seems to be implied in these points of view, namely the dualism of subject and thing. We cannot even say that he denies this dualism. But he considers the dualism to be the dualization of a deeper unity, and he says that the unity continues to exist within the dualization. The duality must be understood as the dualization of a deeper reality which does not lose its unity. (Emphasis ours)²³

It is impossible not to notice here overtones of the mystical quest spilling over into the world of philosophy. Perhaps, fundamentally, both endeavors are essentially the same and our earlier insight, that mystical experience is not only proper to esoteric and fringe areas of humanity but

23 Ibid., p. 51.

belongs to every age and walk of life, here receives further proof of its validity.

As the feeling for one's existence moves in the direction perceived by Merleau-Ponty, a direction which we might characterize as including what we will call a sense of self as organism-environment, more extensive and intensive unitive experiences seem to occur. Let us consider this phrase organism-environment for a moment.

We might begin with a simplified description:

Today, scientists are more and more aware that what things are, and what they are doing, depends on where and when they are doing it. If, then, the definition of a thing or event must include definition of its environment, we realize that any given thing goes with a given environment so intimately and inseparably that it is more and more difficult to draw a clear boundary between the thing and its surroundings.²⁴

We might state, in broad general terms, that what is taking place in the sense of self today is a gradual breakdown not only of a dualism within man between soul and body, but also a crumbling of the airtight perceptual compartments that heretofore have sundered subject and object. An important perceptual shift is taking place as people become less influenced by a predominantly dualistic anthropology. They are tuning into less prejudiced modes of perception that had previously been driven underground or not allowed into the realm of

²⁴ Alan Watts, The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are, New York, Pantheon Books, 1966, p. 61.

reflective awareness because they conflicted with the person's consciously accepted (but not always critically evaluated) philosophy of life.

As the explanation of dualism within man breaks down, so too does the experienced split with his environment. In a very profound sense the current concern with ecology reflects ordinary people's growing perception of the fact that when they pollute a river, they actually pollute themselves. Organism-environment is a phrase that represents the breaking down of that kind of dualistic mind-set that perpetuates the type of perceptual patterns which measure reality in terms of a body-soul, subject-object dichotomy. Our generation seems to be witnessing the closing chapter of a conditioned perception that differentiates things and persons by the distinctness of their individual surfaces.

... this surface approach is gradually working itself to death. The idea that there are "things" that occupy space and have an "outside" is becoming suspect. The idea that there are "events" that go on between "things" is likewise becoming suspect. The idea that there are "qualities" attached to these "things" and "events" is becoming an untenable position. With the development of systems theory, biological ecology, and field analysis, the fallacy of separateness is becoming apparent. The edges of things have become totally blurred, and the "outsides" of things have merged with the "insides" of their environment. Nothing is explained apart from the whole, and no whole is explained as a sum of its parts. Man, who once believed himself separate from the universe, has suddenly found himself involved in it. Every time he discovers a new principle in nature he finds a new pattern in his brain and has to learn a new pattern of living. Every shattered theory is a shattered mental concept and a broken self-image. Every meddling move man makes against the world around him turns out to rebound in his face. Instead of beating the universe into submission from above--from outside--man now finds himself inside the universe. He himself is totally caught in the seamless robe, trying to pull a thread here and there without hanging himself. The universe as the container of man has become the challenge in our time, so that the heart of the universe is not somewhere else but is instead the heart also of man.²⁵

What we are here suggesting is that the sense of self as organism-environment, gradually developing on a wider scale as dualisms inherent within classical philosophy and theology break down, may contain within itself the seeds of a possible explanation of shifts in perception associated with unitive mystical experiences. As people regard or feel themselves less and less in terms of internal and external

25 Barry Wood, The Magnificent Frolic, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1970, p. 167.

divisions, the traditionally accepted philosophies which reinforced the perceptions and sense of self associated with these divisions cease to have significant influence. Perhaps, then, the ensuing more unified modes of consciousness that become normal and socially acceptable actually contain the same dynamisms that were operative in mystical forms of awareness which appeared as abnormal when the prevailing consciousness was based largely on more dualistic modes of thought and perception.

Let us examine further some of the theoretical explanations for more unified modes of perception as they are appearing today, especially within the physical sciences and the sciences of man. At the same time, we will compare these explanations with some of the unitive descriptions of the mystics to discern whether some sort of parallel seems justified.

My immediate goal at this point in the research presentation is simply to lay out some of the evidence which seems to support my contention that theoretical explanations of unitive consciousness (such as the intensifying sense of self as organism-environment) currently appearing within such diverse fields as physics, biology, psychology, psychedelic research, philosophy, and even parapsychology seem to shed light on the unitive experience described in mystic literature. Afterwards, I shall examine whether the notion of

congruence with the experiencing process, as described in the writings of Carl Rogers and Eugene Gendlin, serves to clarify even more the conditions under which such unitive experiences can contribute to fuller human functioning.

Let us turn, then, to a brief presentation of some of the basic postulates and implications of a field theory approach to reality as originated by modern theoretical physics and applied within other disciplines as well.

b) Field Theory and Unitive Consciousness

Henry Margenau once noted that "The metaphysical wealth reposing largely untapped in modern physical theory is enormous and challenging to the investigator".²⁶ This is especially true regarding its application to the study of religious awareness. These seems to be a major perception development taking place within ever-widening segments of humanity which, surprisingly enough, is perhaps most evident in the writings of serious mystics and modern theoretical physicists.

Let us begin by recalling a passage from William James quoted in our introductory pages which we felt constituted a point of departure for our present research effort.

²⁶ Henry Margenau, "Einstein's Conception of Reality", in P. A. Schilpp, Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist, New York, Harper & Row, 1959, p. 246.

Disregarding the over-beliefs, and confining ourselves to what is common and generic, we have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come, a positive content of religious experience which, it seems to me, is literally and objectively true as far as it goes.²⁷

Initiating our reflections, then, on the consciousness of a "wider self" as it appears within religious awareness, we wish to first focus attention on two quite distinct perceptual approaches used by physicists when attempting to solve problems concerning the nature of reality. We might call these two the approach of Newtonian Mechanics (Classical Physics) and the approach of Field Theory (Modern Physics).

In its most basic orientation to the overall nature of things, classical physics is very close to the "common-sense" approach. It operates on the assumption that one should be primarily oriented to individual, unique units ("things" and "events"), and only secondarily with how they combine into classes of units, classes of classes of units, and so forth. The basic angle of approach is to the individual unit, the individual object or event. A recognizable perception can be responded to--at least theoretically--with the statement "Oh, that is a so-and-so." This means, in effect, "I recognize that first as an individual entity, a unitary 'thing,' and then secondarily, I classify it as a unique member of the class of so-and-so's." The focus is on the individual unit of being, separate in the recognition from the rest of reality, and this individuality is considered most "real".²⁸

27 William James, Op. Cit., p. 388.

28 Lawrence LeShan, "Human Survival of Biological Death", in Main Currents in Modern Thought, Vol. 26, No. 2, Nov.-Dec. 1969, p. 36.

The approach of classical physics is, however, quite different from that taken by modern theoretical physicists.

In field theory the matter is quite otherwise. The primary, most "real," aspect of an entity is its part in the larger pattern, and our perception of it cannot be responded to by an "Oh, that is a so-and-so." To perceive it at all, apart from the total field, is to perceive it as a subsystem, an artificially separated aspect of a field of stresses [...]. The field theory approach is first to the total gestalt, and this is what is perceived as "real." Parts of this total gestalt may be considered individually as sub-patterns, but it is recognized that this is only for the purpose of making it easier to conceptualize and communicate about them. The separation is seen as essentially false to the reality.²⁹

The significance of this shift in emphasis cannot be over-stressed. Perhaps a flavor of the importance for physics itself may be had by noting the reaction of so eminent a scientist as Max Planck:

In modern mechanics [...] it is impossible to obtain an adequate version of the laws for which we are looking, unless the physical system is regarded as a whole. According to modern mechanics (field theory), each individual particle of the system, in a certain sense, at any one time, exists simultaneously in every part of the space occupied by the system. This simultaneous existence applies not merely to the field of force with which it is surrounded, but also to its mass and its charge.

Thus, we see that nothing less is at stake here than the concept of the particle--the most elementary concept of classical mechanics. We are compelled to give up the earlier essential meaning of this idea; only in a number of special border-line cases can we retain it.³⁰

29 Loc. Cit.

30 Max Planck, Where is Science Going?, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1933, p. 113, as quoted in Lawrence LeShan, Op. Cit., p. 36.

Einstein goes even further, showing that this particular advance in understanding of the nature of physical reality completely shatters an entire explanation and way of looking at the world.

Before Clerk Maxwell, people conceived of physical reality--insofar as it is supposed to represent events in nature--as material points, whose changes consist exclusively of motions [...] After Maxwell they conceived physical reality as represented by continuous fields, not mechanically explicable [...] This change in the conception of reality is the most profound and fruitful one that has come to physics since Newton...³¹

It is important to realize that the field theory perception and approach does not totally supplant that of classical physics. The two orientations represent fundamentally different perceptions and approaches to reality. There are instances where one works and the other does not. Hence, we can at this point only say that we are dealing with two complementary views, each supplementing the other, and neither telling the entire story.

³¹ Henry Margenau, *Op. Cit.*, p. 257. James Clerk Maxwell (1831-79) was a brilliant Scottish physicist who based much of his study and research on that of Faraday and went on to develop the theory of the electromagnetic field on a mathematical basis. He thereby made possible a much greater understanding of the phenomena in this field.

Lawrence LeShan³² distinguishes between classical and field theory orientations by utilizing a more mathematical approach:

The viewpoint of classical physics and of commonsense geometrizes the world in terms of boundary points, lines and surfaces, and is concerned with the relationships, of these. With such a viewpoint, boundaries and limits are seen inherent in the structure of reality and are basic to all conceptual derivation. A lake is perceived as limited by the land around it; a life by the terminal points of birth and death.

Field theory does not accept this. In Margenau's words, "The central recognition of the theory of relativity is that geometry--is a construct of the human intellect." It recognizes this type of geometrizing as one set of ways of conceptualizing reality, and goes beyond this set to a boundaryless conceptualization of reality. In this boundaryless world-picture there are no limiting points, lines or surfaces, nor such termination events as birth and death. Geometry which includes boundaries and surfaces is considered to be useful in the "limited case" and as a tool for special purposes, but is not seen as inherent in reality.³³

Here again, the perceptual orientation is toward the "whole" rather than an isolated sub-system.

The same sort of field phenomenon also appears in biology as noted by Gardner Murphy.

32 Lawrence LeShan, Ph.D. is a professor at Mills College of Education in New York City. He has been an active researcher in the areas of paranormal functioning and has recently published Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal: A Report of Work in Progress, a work that may return research on altered states of consciousness to the center of the scientific enterprise.

33 Lawrence LeShan, "Human Survival of Biological Death", p. 40.

It likewise became evident in the biological sciences early in the present century that the field manner of thinking was of value, because a fundamental unity of nature began to appear in which the laws of physics and the laws of biology proved to have many formal similarities. An effort was made in embryology, notably by Spemann, to show the operation of the field principle during embryonic growth. In his fascinating experiments, tiny loops were passed over the various microscopically observed regions on the surfaces of an embryo, and the material removed from the embryo and transplanted immediately to another embryo. By this and other methods it was possible to show what happens to the same kind of tissue when it grows in several different environments--an environment provided by the first body, an environment provided by the body of another embryo to which it has been transplanted, and the environment of the test tube. The result was to show that the same kind of cells, removed at the same time from the same growing individual, would become, in one environment, skin cells; in a second, muscle cells; in a third, nerve cells. Growth is an expression of a field.³⁴

One fascinating aspect of the forward movement of modern science has always been the way in which a basic insight appearing in one discipline, to the degree that it involves some aspect of a universal law of evolution or perception, will invariably crop up in a somewhat similar form in the research of an entirely different science.

Abraham Maslow, in his study of deficiency-motivated and growth-motivated perception, arrived at the following conclusion:

³⁴ Gardner Murphy, "Field Theory and Survival", in Three Papers on the Survival Problem, New York, The American Society for Psychical Research, Inc., [no date], p. 195-196. The article also appears in The Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, Vol. 39, October 1945, p. 205.

... our understanding of perception and therefore of the perceived world will be much changed and enlarged if we study carefully the distinction between need-interested and need-disinterested or desireless perception. Because the latter is so much more concrete and less abstracted and selective, it is possible for such a person to see more easily the intrinsic nature of the percept. Also, he can perceive simultaneously the opposites, the dichotomies, the polarities, the contradictions and the incompatibles. It is as if less developed people lived in an Aristotelian world in which classes and concepts have sharp boundaries and are mutually exclusive and incompatible, e.g. male-female, selfish-unselfish, adult-child, kind-cruel, good-bad. A is A and everything else is not-A in the Aristotelian logic, and never the twain shall meet. But seen by self-actualizing people is the fact that A and not-A interpenetrate and are one, that any person is simultaneously good and bad, male and female, adult and child. One cannot place a whole person on a continuum, only an abstracted aspect of a person.³⁵

If Maslow's research conclusions are correct, the goal of some future dissertation effort might be to compare and seek to co-relate characteristics of the deficiency-motivated person with the basic approach to reality of classical physics, and likewise the characteristics and modes of perception of the growth-motivated person with the approach of field theory. It may very well be that classical physics represents a rudimentary stage in the evolution of science which corresponds to that period in the growth of the human species when the basic needs of survival are still being satisfied by the vast majority of mankind. If this be true, then the arrival of field theory may signal not merely a new breakthrough in the

35 Abraham H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 37.

field of science, but a radical advance in the quality of human life and consciousness.

Another important area of research where the basic intuitions of field theory have already brought about profound changes in the models used to explain certain unusual aspects of experience is in the field of parapsychology and psychic research. Dr. Gardner Murphy has carefully studied the subject of field theory and its implications for human survival of death because of the major change it has already introduced into the explanations of clairvoyance, precognition and other so-called paranormal phenomena.

... Mrs. Sidgwick, perhaps most clearly of all, undertook to show that paranormal processes are best understood if we give up the idea of transmission from one mind to another and speak simply of the fusion of agents' and percipients' ideas [...] Two individuals seem to become psychically one--or indeed in some cases there appears to be a group of three or more individuals who somehow, while remaining themselves, yet become a single psychical entity. We in the West deeply fear, and indeed resent, this approach, for our individualism in all its phases dreads any loss of self-awareness--just as many persons dread to lose consciousness under ether, or to be hypnotized. Actually, however, this approach, long cultivated in the East, has forced its way into recognition in psychical research simply because the evidence seems to permit no other valid interpretation.³⁶

³⁶ Gardner Murphy, "Field Theory and Survival", p. 186-187. Mrs. Henry Sidgwick was wife of the English philosopher Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900) who studied and taught at Trinity College and was a founder of the Society of Psychical Research in England. She and her husband worked as a team in their efforts to more accurately understand what was behind the occurrence of psychic phenomena. She is mentioned frequently in: Gardner Murphy and Robert O. Ballou, eds., William James on Psychical Research, New York, Viking Press, 1969.

The approach to paranormal powers which consider them as somehow emanating from single individuals is really an extension into parapsychology of the "concept of the particle", already replaced, as Max Planck noted, in more advanced stages of theoretical research. As the implications of field theory become more pronounced it is clearer why Murphy can maintain that "... one thing which prevents paranormal contact is our psychological insulation one from another".³⁷ If paranormal powers are expressions of a field, then anything which inhibits the function of the field would retard the expression of so-called psychic phenomena.

With field theory opening up the possibility of generating novel perceptions and more daring hypotheses in the researchers, Dr. Murphy expressed his own cautions and hopes for the future of parapsychology.

Hypotheses should be bold, but methods of verification cautious. It is the present hypothesis that these various powers are not solely derived from the psychological make-up of individuals; that they depend in some degree upon interpersonal relations--indeed, that such interpersonal powers are much richer and more complex than any possessed by the individual when isolated from his fellows. When a group of individuals functioning as an interpersonal entity is involved, they may have really extraordinary capacity to make contact with phases of reality which transcend time and space.³⁸

37 Ibid., p. 190.

38 Ibid., p. 192.

This quality of being tied in to a larger field, or that a field expresses itself through an individual is finding steady confirmation from many different sources. For example, Mr. Cleve Backster, Director of the Backster School of Lie Detection in New York has produced solid evidence to indicate that there is a kind of "primary perception" within all living things. He has conducted experiments in which when tiny shrimp are killed there is an instantaneous and measurable reaction in other living things, like plants, in the immediate area. Furthermore, nothing, not even lead shields seem to be able to impede this communication.³⁹

It has been reported that Soviet scientists have also conducted experiments in which a mother rabbit was kept on shore in a laboratory while her newborn litter was taken to sea in a submarine. Electrodes were implanted deep within the brain of the mother and then, at determined moments on

39 Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain, New York, Bantam Books, 1970, p. 34. The following references are listed to Backster's work: Thorn Bacon, "The Man who Reads Nature's Secret Signals", National Wildlife, Feb.-March, 1969; "Do Plants Feel Emotion?", Electro-Technology, April, 1969; "ESP: More Science, Less Mysticism", Medical World News, March 21, 1969; Cleve Backster, "Evidence of a Primary Perception in Plant Life", International Journal of Parapsychology, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1968; F. L. Kunz, "Feeling in Plants", Main Currents, May-June, 1969. The following note appeared in the Parapsychology Review, Vol. 2, No. 6, Nov.-Dec. 1971, p. 5: "Mr. Cleve Backster, of plant perception fame, has been experimenting with eggs. He has found that destruction of an egg at one end of the laboratory causes great agitation in a second egg at the other end."

board the submarine, which was deeply submerged, the baby rabbits were killed one by one. At each synchronized moment of death the brain of the mother reacted.⁴⁰

All such research seems to confirm the incredibly complex way in which we express various fields of force and are integrally tied in with the world around us both in life-- and death.

40 Ibid., p. 33. Research on Force Field Detectors which can pick up and measure the subtle radiations that tie living beings together is being conducted in Canada. The authors of Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain give the following interesting account: "At the University of Saskatchewan, Canada, research is also being done on measurement of human force fields at a distance. The Canadian group, headed by the well-known Dr. Abram Hoffer and Dr. Harold Kelm, is working with a detector (invented by an American, David Thomson) consisting of two capacitor plates, a preamplifier, and a line recorder like that of an electrocardiograph. This detector charts the body's invisible electrical "aura" or force field at a distance. For instance, as a patient walks into a room, the detector determines at a distance whether his anxiety level is high, medium, or low.

Inventor Thomson, assisted by Dr. Jack Ward of Trenton, New Jersey, discovered that a person's force field detects the frequencies of the force fields of other people at a distance and is affected by them. Says Thomson, 'People's force fields immediately sense fear, aggression, panic, or friendliness in another person.' To prove his point he built a transmitter to send out 'anxiety waves'--an electromagnetic field like that of an extremely anxious human. People reacted sharply to them. Thomson reports he could clear a crowded room in fifteen minutes flat by turning on the transmitter.

Thomson also built transmitters to send out 'calm' waves which duplicate the force field of a relaxed, cheerful person. Thomson says the transmitters might be used to calm frightened children or nervous hospital patients. (See Maclean's magazine, Sept. 1968).

Results at the University of Saskatchewan, Dr. Hoffer wrote us, are 'quite encouraging'."

The question of survival after death, for Murphy, expresses itself in a different manner when approached from a field theory point of view.

... it is likely that it is not only after death, but here and now, that the deep-level aspect of the self is an inter-individual reality, exactly as Myers suggested throughout his writings, and perhaps in a sense even more profound than he guessed. Perhaps both before and after death individuals are aspects reflecting trends of the whole; and survival may be a continuity of these aspects of the whole, though undergoing gradual change. From this point of view, the apparent sharpness of individuality is not only a biological fact, it is also a biological artifact; that is, we seem to be more sharply individuated than we actually are.⁴¹

This kind of approach completely alters our usual understanding of the question: Does personality survive bodily death or not?

The question presupposes a rigidity, a sharpness, a distinctiveness, an encapsulation, which simply is not an attribute of the thing we know as personality. The field properties of personality from infancy to old age change profoundly as contacts change. With the change called death, there is every reason to believe that in so far as psychical operations continue, they must, as aspects of larger fields, take on new qualities, new structural relationships. The only way in which individuality could survive unaltered would be to cling forever to the biological organization first determined under evolutionary conditions--something perilously close to what the spiritualists call "earthbound" conditions.⁴²

41 Gardner Murphy, "Field Theory and Survival", p. 204. The reference to Myers is to: F. W. H. Myers, Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death, New York, University Books, 1961.

42 Ibid., p. 201-202.

It should be clear from the material just presented that advances in a field theory conceptualization of the universe have begun to drastically alter the theoretical models used to explain various paranormal phenomena. What practical effects this shift in emphasis may eventually bring about still remains to be seen as various experimental procedures are readjusted to this newer way of visualizing and interpreting the data.

In summary, we might say that the general direction being taken regarding theoretical explanations of the nature of reality is that the physical system must be regarded as a whole. Boundaries and cut-off points represent more the artificial limitations imposed on reality by a particular mode of perception rather than the actual nature of the world as it is. This leads to the interesting conclusion that each of us constructs the world in which we live in the sense that our experience of reality is nearly always a mixture of what actually is plus our particular way of perceiving it.

As we shall soon see, the important function of meditation and various ascetical practices is to encourage unitive consciousness of the actual unity in reality by directly attacking those patterns of perception which impose on reality the boundaries and artificial cut-off points that really are not there. Unitive consciousness is blocked by habitual perception patterns that arbitrarily divide experience into

various segments that can be individually tagged as though they were somehow separate from each other. By voluntarily tampering with these patterns, a different experience of reality becomes possible and with it the likelihood of greater unitive consciousness.

Since each person experiences his or her own individual reality, made up by combining what is in the external world with their own unique way of perceiving it, we will spend a short time discussing this question because of further light it sheds on the generation and nature of unitive consciousness.

c) The Experience of Individual Reality

Field theory represents not only an interesting interpretation of the nature of reality, but much more fundamentally a radically different experience of self which makes such a view possible.

In a current research project Dr. Lawrence LeShan has tried to develop an understanding of perception which draws heavily on the literature of classical mysticism and theoretical physics. This work lays great stress on the importance of a unitive sense of self as organism-environment. However, in this instance LeShan uses a slightly different approach to the question of perception which it will be useful for us to briefly consider. He avoids the term

environment but contains its essential meaning in a more comprehensive phrase individual reality.

The characteristics of an organism determine which characteristics of the environment can be perceived, responded to, and interacted with. It follows that if these characteristics of the organism change, it will then respond to and interact with an environment that is functionally different. In modern psychological parlance, it will then be in a different life-space.

The term environment clearly has special meaning conditioned by long usage. For this reason, we shall use the term individual reality (IR) to denote those aspects of reality which the individual perceives, responds to, or interacts with. We are not concerned here with the problem of what reality ultimately consists of.⁴³

Individual Reality (IR) is really an organism-environment phrase that also includes the particular perceptual patterns operative in any given instance, which, in a very real sense, are constitutive of what comprises the reality and experience of the organism in question.

Reality, for any individual, is always a combination of what's out there plus his perception of it and the particular aspects of the so-called objective world with which he interacts. In this sense each person's individual reality (IR) is bound to be at least somewhat different, and in some instances quite radically different from someone else's. Take, for example

⁴³ Lawrence LeShan, Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal: A Report of Work in Progress, New York, Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., 1969, p. 12.

The difference [...] between the IR used by a man with his visual system and that of an eagle with his, between the IR used by a man's nose and that of a dog, between the IR of a biologist before Darwin's insight restructured the data and afterwards, [...] The same major differences appear if we contrast the IR of the musically untrained tone deaf individual with that of the trained musician with perfect pitch; the IR of the communication engineer before and after Marconi; or the IR of the psychologically rigid and constricted patient before and after successful therapy.⁴⁴

Individual reality is a function of the way a person experiences his existence, his sense of self. He perceives in accord with his beliefs about himself, his expectations of the world, and his previous experience and social conditioning. For someone brought up with the ordinary, common sense view of reality proper to our Western world, it is normal to consider the world in terms of subject and object, with the classical lines of individuality firmly in place. This is not the case, however, with the mystic whose more predominantly field theory mode of perception has tuned his perception and IR to different aspects of the world in which he lives.

44 Ibid., p. 13-14.

"In the mystical IR there is a dislocation, disruption, abolition, distortion of the usually perceived individual and relational characteristics of things, and a resynthesis of these characteristics in a new way." This seems to make more sense and to hold promise. The mystic is searching for and perceiving new unities; unities that have failed, aborted, and not-existed in the commonsense view. These may well be irrelevant or oppositional to the unities of the commonsense IR. The individual event is seen as part of a larger pattern which in turn is also a part of the great pattern which makes up the cosmos. The most important aspect of the unique event is, for the mystic, its part in the great pattern and harmony which includes all unique events. (The expert medical diagnostician is not concerned primarily with the uniqueness of a specific clinical finding, but is concerned with its integration in the total organismic pattern of the patient.)⁴⁵

It is easy to see the close parallel between the mystic IR and that of the modern theoretical physicist--and this is precisely LeShan's point.

... at least three groups of individuals use the field theory approach in their work: serious mystics, serious theoretical physicists, serious clairvoyants [...]. Each of these three groups (mystics, physicists and clairvoyants) state clearly that, when they are functioning in their special capacities, they conceptualize the world in this way. Their attitudes, their techniques and their goal, of course, differ widely.⁴⁶

But in each case, the quality of reality experienced ranges from the common sense view of classical physics, what LeShan refers to as "sensory-individual-reality" (S-IR), all the way along the spectrum until it reaches the more intense

45 Ibid., p. 44.

46 Lawrence LeShan, "Human Survival of Biological Death", p. 44.

unitive experiences of organism-environment, what LeShan terms the "clairvoyant-individual-reality" (C-IR), appearing in the field theory point of view.

... the heart of the difference between the two IR's. This consists of the way one views a person, object or event. If one sees its uniqueness, its isolation, its I-stand-alone quality; if one sees its this-is-a-so-and-so, its what-are-important-are-its-boundaries-and-cut-off-points quality, its this-is-where-it-ends-and-something-else-begins quality, one views it from the S-IR.

If, however, one sees as its most important characteristics its harmonious-relationships-to-other-parts-of-the-total quality, its part-of-a-pattern-that-is-part-of-a-larger-pattern quality, its field-theory quality, one views it from the C-IR.

Meister Eckhardt contrasts these two IR's when he writes: When is a man in mere understanding? I answer, "When he sees one thing separated from another." And when is a man above mere understanding? That I can tell you: "When a man sees All in all, then a man stands beyond mere understanding."⁴⁷

An obvious point which goes to the heart of the contribution which this dissertation hopes to make is that a person will view reality in terms of boundaries and cut-off points to the extent that he views himself this way. And he will be more fully focused on the total pattern and field-theory quality of reality to the extent that his own sense of self and feeling for his existence is secure enough that he can risk laying aside the need for clear-cut definitions and rigid boundaries. Such a person can risk a more fluid

⁴⁷ Lawrence LeShan, Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal, p. 58-59.

sense of self. Later, we hope to show that an important characteristic of the congruent person is his ability to enjoy and actively seek just such a flowing, process-like, or field theory experience of self.

For many of us the possibility of merging with something larger than ourselves poses a distinct threat to our individuality.

We rebel at yielding to the excess of vitalisation that is bearing us along because we fear that in doing so we shall lose the precious fragment, 'me', which we have acquired.⁴⁸

If life has forced us to discover and fight for an identity by being excessively set over-against the rest of reality, hewing out our unique self by resolutely affirming what we are not and hanging on to ground we have gained, then any shift in the delicate balance which hinges on preserving a clear demarcation point between where the subjective I leaves off and the world of objects begins is bound to bring a certain unrest.

The experience is just the opposite, however, for those whose inner security and sense of self are such that they need not view themselves as a kind of walled fortress, behind which they prepare for the fearsome assaults which life seems to continually make upon them. Their experience of being loved and accepted has sufficiently nourished them so they

⁴⁸ Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, The Future of Man, New York, Harper & Row, 1964, p. 254.

can risk finding themselves in new ways, resulting in the possibility of actively seeking a wider sense of self that can become a pleasurable and sought after experience. Such persons often discover that

... loss of the "boundaries" of the self is just as rich and just as interesting a form of existence as preservation of rigid self-boundaries.⁴⁹

But what is the precise meaning of such a phrase "to lose the boundaries of the self" or to experience the resolution of the subject-object dichotomy? Does it mean that a sense of individuality is totally lost and that the person in question can no longer distinguish between his commonsense experience of self and the rest of reality? Does it mean that one perceives higher unities within which one has a rightful place?

It would seem that at this point the authentic sensitive, the theoretical physicist, and even some philosophers are in closer agreement with the orthodox theistic mystic who rejects pantheism than with the mystic who speaks of totally losing his sense of individuality. All four seem to maintain that a sense of individuality and differentiation is preserved but at the same time higher levels of unity are perceived. This closely parallels the conclusion of Merleau

49 Gardner Murphy, "Field Theory and Survival", p. 205.

Ponty who steered a careful course between the excessive individualism of his time together with the inevitable dualisms upon which it was built, and the equally excessive melting of all reality into one amorphous lump.

Western philosophy has exaggerated individualization, and it has forgotten that individualization takes place within the unity of Being, and that this unity of Being continues to exist in individualization. We must not deny individualization and think that we form all together just one immense animal. Individualization is real, but it does not transcend the unity of Being.⁵⁰

The orthodox mystic seems to be in agreement with the serious sensitive and the theoretical physicist about the maintenance of a sense of individuality.

Not that "everything is everything," "one is all," and so forth, but that new relationships--new ever-larger unities--are perceived which open new possibilities of interaction with reality. The mystic may well be seeking and sometimes perceiving the highest possible level of unity (a level in which all objects and events are part of a pattern, a field, and cannot be meaningfully described apart from it), but this is a far cry from the end of all identity and differentiation. The meaning of the flecks of paint on a canvas cannot, by the artist, be meaningfully described apart from the total meaning of the painting, but the flecks of paint do exist, and each is unique. There are still multiple unities in the mystical cosmos. They, however, are different, perhaps higher, perhaps wider than in the commonsense viewpoint, but it is not featureless chaos. Things exist in the mystical universe, but they may be different things than in the commonsense universe.⁵¹

50 Remy Kwant, Op. Cit., p. 59.

51 Lawrence LeShan, Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal, p. 44-45.

The orthodox mystic seems to be in general agreement with the sensitive and physicist about maintenance of the sense of individuality. However, the mystic is usually far less tolerant of the sensory-individual-reality (S-IR) or the commonsense approach to reality which, to his way of thinking, is filled with illusion and artificial divisions that can block contact with higher levels of unity and ultimate reality that actually exist but are unseen by most people. The clairvoyant and the physicist, for their part, however, are much more lenient and less harsh when passing judgment on the commonsense approach to consciousness.

The sensitive does not claim that the commonsense viewpoint built on information received by the senses [...] is wrong. He claims, however, that this is only one way of looking at reality, and that there is another, at least equally valid, alternative.⁵²

The physicist, with his experimental bias, is perhaps even more informative in his reasons for tolerating various approaches to reality. With the radical differences which appear in the classical physics and field theory conceptualizations, it seems natural for him to pose the question: "Which is closer to the true structure of reality?"

52 Ibid., p. 54-55.

Tempting as this question may seem, we have learned in the last fifty years that it is not one which we can legitimately ask. In science, the goal of understanding the true nature of reality is, in Max Planck's words, "theoretically unobtainable." What we can legitimately ask is, "What logically follows if we can conceive reality to be structured in certain ways and proceed as if it were so structured? What happens, what do we observe, and what can we learn and accomplish?" (As Henry Margenau put it, "The question, then, is not whether matter is continuous but how theories succeed when they regard as a continuum the construct which they take to be their system.") This is all we can ask, and we cannot legitimately escape the question by refusing to concede that we are organizing and structuring reality. Willy-nilly we do structure it and our perception of reality is an amalgam consisting of unknown and unknowable proportions of ourselves and whatever "reality" may be. There is, wrote the mystic Evelyn Underhill, "a game of give and take between consciousness and outside reality," and few philosophers or physicists today would disagree with her.⁵³

The real question, then, is not one of truth or falsehood, rightness or wrongness, the validity or invalidity of different approaches. It is, rather, a more realistic recognition that sometimes what appear as mutually exclusive explanations produce positive results--as, for example, in the wave and particle theories of light.

⁵³ Lawrence LeShan, "Human Survival of Biological Death", p. 37. The references to Max Planck, Henry Margenau, and Evelyn Underhill are as follows: Max Planck, Where is Science Going?, London, George Allen & Lewin, 1933, p. 15; Henry Margenau, The Nature of Physical Reality, New York, McGraw Hill, 1956, p. 194; Evelyn Underhill, Practical Mysticism, London, J. M. Dent & Sons, 1964, p. 27.

We state that altered states of consciousness produce altered perceptions of reality, and that these altered perceptions of reality are valid. Our view here is that perceiving reality in different--although equally valid--ways produces different possibilities of interaction with it. The Western cultural view of reality is seen, in this exploration, as valid. The mystical (and clairvoyant) view of reality is seen as equally valid. Neither is more true than the other. It depends on what you are trying to do that determines which is more effective.⁵⁴

Perhaps one reason why the mystic is less tolerant of the commonsense (S-IR) approach to reality is that the immediate goal he is trying to achieve is one that directly depends upon his moving beyond this commonsense mode of perception in order to perceive the higher unities of which he has perhaps only had a glimpse. For him, the commonsense viewpoint functions as a kind of obstacle to growth. Usually the force of his ascetical practices, both contemplation and various forms of renunciation, are brought to bear against his ordinary perception of reality in order to sufficiently shake it so that higher levels of perception may eventually emerge and become operative. This is the function of the mystic way which is generally a path of conquest as one roots out the blocks to progress. It is clear, then, given the immediate goal of unitive consciousness which he seeks, that the mystic will tend to take a dim view of

⁵⁴ Lawrence LeShan, Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal, p. 42.

ingrained patterns of perception which stand in his way. The sensitive and physicist, on the other hand, can live with them a little more comfortably and perhaps more easily integrate them into their total life picture.

However, it is relevant to note that even the mystics recognize that the manner of perception that characterizes the clairvoyant-individual-reality is of such a nature that no person can live in it for very long. "Indeed, Ramakrishna says that no human being can biologically survive living only in the C-IR for more than 21 days."⁵⁵ An ancient Buddhist saying pointedly states: Before Satori, chop wood and haul water. After Satori, chop wood and haul water. A balance between the two modes of perception is obviously the most realistic mode of existence for the mystic as well as any human being.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 55. The reference to Ramakrishna is to The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, New York, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1952.

... each of the two ways of organizing reality which we are considering here has assets and liabilities. In the presence of an immediate stress which threatens the continuation of the biological aspects of our being--our body--the commonsense viewpoint is far superior to the field theory viewpoint. If one wishes to avoid the approaching truck, dodge the thrown spear, or get food for one's empty stomach, it is far wiser to conceptualize the world in the manner of commonsense and classical physics than to conceptualize it after the manner of the mystic and the modern physicist. So long as the body is functioning as a biological unity and one is concerned that it continue so to function, it is essential to retain the commonsense "individuality-first, classification-second" world-picture, at least the largest part of the time.⁵⁶

Most probably Abraham Maslow's distinction between Deficiency-Cognition and Being-Cognition closely follows the distinction between S-IR and C-IR which LeShan is developing. Maslow, too, maintained that a healthy level of functionally operative D-cognition was normal and necessary in the life of the person whose level of awareness had reached the point where a good deal of Being-awareness was present. But Maslow also showed how D-cognition could become an obstacle to healthy growth in the capacity for B-cognition. This happened when basic needs were unanswered and of necessity the individual's outlook on reality was largely conditioned by the demands of these unanswered needs. At such a time the Deficiency-cognition which constituted the primary perceptual

⁵⁶ Lawrence LeShan, "Human Survival of Biological Death", p. 43.

orientation of such a deprived individual made the possibility of movement in the direction of higher levels of Being-awareness all but impossible.

LeShan discusses the blocking function of Sensory-Individual Reality on the appearance of Clairvoyant-Individual Reality as follows:

Buddhist philosophy states that one does not produce Nirvana (in our view the total experience of the C-IR plus a special attitude toward it), but reveals to oneself what is already there. Similarly, students of the mescaline experience, as well as experienced sensitives, state their belief that the C-IR is not produced, but is revealed to them as always having been there, after they managed to "shut off the flow of images," "inhibit the inhibitions," "see through the illusion of multiplicity," etc. Evelyn Underhill and St. Theresa of Avila have both made this same point, as well as many other serious mystics have. All agree that the mystical or clairvoyant mode of being is inherent in man, but blocked by our usual modes of perception, and that it is naturally used when these usual modes are shut off.⁵⁷

The unblocking of this more unitive mode of being and perception has been the traditional goal of asceticism with its various forms of contemplation and renunciation that serve to sufficiently disrupt the normal patterns of consciousness so that this latent awareness may emerge. This is the difficult task and challenge set before those seekers of higher unitive consciousness who throughout history have set out

⁵⁷ Lawrence LeShan, Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal, p. 54.

upon what has been called the Mystic Way.

The material developed thus far has hopefully provided some insight into the fact and nature of unity in reality and of unitive consciousness. We are now in a position to begin dealing with the question of "progression" in states of consciousness. What steps are involved in advancing from a subject-object, "boundaries-and-cut-off-points" manner of perceiving reality to one where there is greater ability to perceive the fundamental unity that exists in the world? Just how does one move from the Sensory-Individual Reality (S-IR) end of the perceptual spectrum to the heightened unitive perception enjoyed by those who possess more of an ability for Clairvoyant-Individual Reality (C-IR)?

We will begin our discussion of this question by presenting some of the material from non-religious and religious sources which simply establish the fact of some sort of progression in these states of consciousness. In the next chapters we will examine the actual dynamics and triggers involved in such shifts in perception as well as some of the conditions under which these alterations in consciousness would seem to contribute to fuller human functioning and when they do not. But first, the actual development itself.

3. Progression in Unitive Consciousness--The Mystic Way.

Evelyn Underhill warns her readers that those who set out upon the mystic path must be prepared to endure "the complete remaking of character and the liberation of a new, or rather latent, form of consciousness".⁵⁸ She, too, seems convinced, like the Buddhists, from both her own experience as well as a lifetime of study of classical mystic literature, that one does not produce experiences of union. Rather, what is already there is revealed--hence, her stress on "latent forms of consciousness".

Whether it is most accurate to speak of the "liberation of a new, or latent form of consciousness", the gradual "intensification of consciousness", or movement along some kind of continuum from common sense to field theory perception, is difficult to determine. However, reference to some sort of progression appears universally in religious writing and poses two distinct problems for the investigator. First, does any predictable pattern seem to be discernible as one moves toward heightened levels of unitive awareness? What characteristic or common experiences seem to occur? Second, what triggering mechanisms and other techniques for sufficiently disrupting the subject-object mode of perception and

58 Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, p. 81.

encouraging the unitive dimension are available and have been traditionally used to move in the direction of these desired altered states of consciousness? Let us begin with at least one possible answer to the problem of predictable pattern.

An important hypothesis presented by Dr. LeShan is that the quality of consciousness which goes with each of the two perceptual approaches to reality represented by commonsense classical physics (S-IR) and field theory (C-IR) are not equivocally separated. Rather, they seem to represent two points at opposite ends of a spectrum and, in LeShan's view, "There is a progression of mental states in which we move along this spectrum, in which our concepts of reality progress from the every-day view of commonsense and classical physics to the field theory viewpoint".⁵⁹ LeShan outlines the progression of mental states and change in consciousness as it proceeds through what he considers to be six distinct steps.

⁵⁹ Lawrence LeShan, "Human Survival of Biological Death", p. 41.

1. Ordinary consciousness; 2. The state of inspiration where there is deep concentration and mental focus on the relationship of entities, with a sudden new insight into these relationships; 3. The "peak experience" as defined by A. H. Maslow; 4. The extrovertive, or "spontaneous" mystical experience; 5. The introvertive or "acquired" mystical experience; 6. The complete mystical state ("paranirvana").⁶⁰

Stage #2 corresponds to that state of mental alertness wherein the beginnings of that intuitive sense for "pattern", all-important for the forward thrust of scientific research, can gradually emerge. Then, as one progresses along the scale, LeShan found that the states of consciousness traditionally sought out by mystics seem to emerge, beginning with the peak experience described by Maslow and

⁶⁰ Loc. Cit. The reference is to Abraham H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, especially Section III, chapters 6-9.

ending with the complete state of parinirvana⁶¹ described in Buddhist literature.

Abraham Maslow's description of how the peak experience feels from the inside shows striking similarities to the general description of field theory perception. This is

61 Nirvana (J., nehan): realization of selfless "I"; satori; the experience of Changelessness, of inner Peace and Freedom. Nirvana (with a small "n") stands against samsara, i.e., birth-and-death. Nirvana (or more exactly, pari-nirvana) is also used in the sense of a return to the original purity of the Buddha-nature after the dissolution of the physical body, i.e., to the Perfect Freedom of the unconditioned state. This description is found in: Philip Kapleau, The Three Pillars of Zen, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967, p. 339-340. William James describes the approach to Nirvana as follows: The Buddhists use the word 'samādhi' as well as the Hindus; but 'dhyāna' is their special word for higher states of contemplation. There seem to be four stages recognized in dhyāna. The first stage comes through concentration of the mind upon one point. It excludes desire, but not discernment or judgment: it is still intellectual. In the second stage the intellectual functions drop off, and the satisfied sense of unity remains. In the third stage the satisfaction departs, and indifference begins, along with memory and self-consciousness. In the fourth stage the indifference, memory, and self-consciousness are perfected. (Just what 'memory, and self-consciousness' mean in this connection is doubtful. They cannot be the faculties familiar to us in the lower life.) Higher stages still of contemplation are mentioned--a region where there exists nothing, and where the meditator says: "There exists absolutely nothing," and stops. Then he reaches another region where he says: "There are neither ideas nor absence of ideas," and stops again. Then another region where, "having reached the end of both idea and perception, he stops finally." This would seem to be, not yet Nirvāna, but as close an approach to it as this life affords. William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 308. (James notes at the end of this passage that he is following the account in C. F. Koeppen: Die Religion des Buddha, Berlin, 1857, i. 585 ff.)

probably one reason why Dr. LeShan chose to include it as one of the stages of consciousness in the continuum of intensifying field theory perception. Maslow saw the peak experience as an important identity-experience wherein a person was closest to being his or her real self.

The person in the peak-experiences feels more integrated (unified, whole, all-of-a-piece), than at other times. He also looks (to the observer) more integrated in various ways [...] e.g. less split or dissociated, less fighting against himself, more at peace with himself, less split between an experiencing-self and an observing-self, more one-pointed, more harmoniously organized, more efficiently organized with all his parts functioning very nicely with each other, more synergic, with less internal friction, etc.⁶²

This sense of inner unity and integration also extends outward into what we have described as a sense of self as organism-environment where the Clairvoyant-Individual Reality (C-IR) mode of perception predominates.

As he gets to be more purely and singly himself he is more able to fuse with the world, with what was formerly not-self, e.g. the lovers come closer to forming a unit rather than two people, the I-Thou monism becomes more possible, the creator becomes one with his work being created, the mother feels one with her child, the appreciator becomes the music (and it becomes him) or the painting, or the dance, the astronomer is "out there" with the stars (rather than a separateness peering across an abyss at another separateness through a telescope-keyhole).

That is, the greatest attainment of identity, autonomy, or selfhood is itself simultaneously a transcending of itself, a going beyond and above selfhood.⁶³

62 Abraham H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, p. 98.

63 Ibid., p. 99.

With this last sentence I feel that Maslow manages to describe a crucial aspect of unitary consciousness insofar as it is connected with human growth. His implied definition of man in terms of a capacity to transcend himself closely parallels that of Merleau-Ponty who concluded that "man is self-transcending movement",⁶⁴ "mouvement de transcendance".⁶⁵ Moreover, Maslow goes one step further as a psychologist and speaks of the actualization of this kind of transcendence as "the greatest attainment of identity, autonomy, or selfhood". In other words, to rephrase it in terms of our own dissertation interest, an important goal or by-product of human growth would seem to be arrival at that mode of perception and unitary consciousness which we are attempting to describe with our phrase "a sense of self as organism-environment", or "field theory" perception, or LeShan's "clairvoyant-individual-reality" (C-IR).

There is an obvious developmental pattern in the inside experience during actualization of a more profound sense of self and individual identity in the normal, healthy person. LeShan concludes that reports indicate a similar (if not identical) development of inner experience is also involved in the movement from the S-IR classical physics mode

64 Remy Kwant, Op. Cit., p. 54.

65 Ibid., p. 47.

of perception to that of the field theory C-IR point of view. As a person moves through the six stages already described they feel different from the inside.

Structurally, these reports indicate a progression in the way the universe is perceived and structured--a progression from the commonsense to the field theory viewpoint. The attributes of consciousness, "how it feels," also change as we move along this progression. We might describe four overlapping areas in which there is almost complete agreement by the experients. Each of these aspects (or facets of what may be a unitary change) increases in intensity and in the totality of permeating consciousness as we progress along the spectrum:

1. A definite knowledge and sense of individuality and self-awareness exists, but this is secondary to a basic sense of being part of, and totally in harmony with, the rest of the cosmos. Being primarily a part of the whole--a subsystem--does not destroy one's sense of individuality, but one perceives oneself more and more as an indivisible part of the indivisible "all." Relatedness is primary; individuality secondary, but very real."

2. There is a sense of peace, of "rightness," of being completely at home in the universe. The inner and outer harmony are so great that action to change what is becomes increasingly unthinkable. In Rosalind Heywood's words, "If you hear music being played perfectly, you don't say, 'play it out of tune.'"

3. The sense of peace and harmony make for non-action, but this is not a "passive" state. One feels at one's highest peak in terms of energy, zest, "joy," in terms of exultancy and exaltation. The mind is clear and very alert. Awareness of oneself and the rest of reality increases as one mounts the spectrum.

4. There is a knowledge that time and space are illusions of the senses and that one is boundaryless in the continuum. One knows one is not confined within the limits of one's skin, not dependent on the body for existence and that the usual belief that this is so is illusion which one's vision now penetrates.

These four aspects of how consciousness "feels" all increase in intensity as the individual comes closer and closer to structuring reality in a field theory way, until they totally permeate consciousness in the advanced mystical state.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Lawrence LeShan, "Human Survival of Biological Death", p. 41.

It seems to me that an important contribution which LeShan makes in his list of the four attributes of greater field-theory or C-IR consciousness is his note about their gradual intensification as a person moves along the continuum from the commonsense approach to reality toward that of heightened unitive consciousness.

Another approach to the inside feeling of progression toward higher unitive states of consciousness has been left us by Evelyn Underhill in her analysis of experiences involved in the journey along the Mystic Way. Miss Underhill outlines the five steps of the mystic venture as (1) Awakening, (2) Purification, (3) Illumination, (4) the Dark Night of the Soul, and (5) the Unitive State or Spiritual Marriage, often referred to as the Ecstasy.⁶⁷ The Dark Night of the Soul is not so much a distinct step appearing at a definite point along the continuum, as it is a recognition of the fact that the course of the mystic does not always run smoothly and that there are periods of aridity, loss of ability to achieve the new consciousness, and general slippage.

The mystic way represents a disciplined attempt to acquire heightened states of awareness and unitive experience. As such, it is distinct from spontaneous mystical consciousness even though many of the actual experiences of both are

67 Evelyn Underhill, Mysticism, p. 169-170.

ultimately the same. The spontaneous simply happens during those relatively rare moments when by chance the predispositions of the organism and its environment harmoniously work together to allow the emergence of altered states of consciousness. The more disciplined approach is aimed at removing the elements of chance and better predisposing the organism for the gifted appearance of such experiences.

a) The Awakening

The awakening of transcendental consciousness for Evelyn Underhill is, as we have already pointed out, "a disturbance of the equilibrium of the self, which results in the shifting of the field of consciousness from lower to higher levels..."⁶⁸ It is described by many psychologists of religion as a more or less intense form of the phenomenon of conversion. Miss Underhill explains that such a phenomenon involves "the abrupt or gradual emergence of intuitions from below the threshold, the consequent remaking of the field of consciousness, an alteration in the self's attitude to the world".⁶⁹

This moment of initial awakening is, more often than not, a kind of spontaneous experience which then invests the

68 Ibid., p. 176.

69 Ibid., p. 177.

mystic with "that passion for the absolute which is to constitute his (the mystic's) distinctive character..."⁷⁰ Once having tasted this newer mode of perception, the novice mystic then is motivated to set about the more arduous task of working to dispose himself for the reception of this mode of consciousness not merely as an occasional chance occurrence but as a more or less habitual state of being.

However, once this initial awakening has occurred and the transcendental sense has emerged to the level of consciousness, there is no turning back for the great mystics. The experience speaks with a kind of authority as, for example, in the experience of St. Francis of Assisi:

In a moment of time, Francis's whole universe has suffered complete rearrangement. There are no hesitations, no uncertainties. The change, which he cannot describe, he knows to be central for life. Not for a moment does he think of disobeying the imperative voice which speaks to him from a higher plane of reality and demands the sacrifice of his career.⁷¹

This sense of inner authority, as we shall soon see, is a distinctive characteristic of nearly all mystic experience. It provides powerful motivation that keeps the mystic single minded in the pursuit of his goal.

70 Loc. Cit.

71 Ibid., p. 181.

This experience, if it is to be complete, if it is to involve the definitive emergence of the self from "the prison of I-hood," its setting out upon the Mystic Way, requires an act of concentration on the self's part as the complement of its initial act of expansion. It must pass beyond the stage of metaphysical rapture or fluid splendour, and crystallize into a willed response to the Reality perceived; a definite and personal relation must be set up between the self and the Absolute Life. To be a spectator of Reality is not enough. The awakened subject is not merely to perceive transcendent life, but to participate therein; and for this, a drastic and costly life-changing is required.⁷²

b) Purification

Now come the initial stages of purification, that "... long slow process of transcendence, of character building..."⁷³

What must be the first step of the self upon this road to perfect union with the Absolute? Clearly, a getting rid of all those elements of normal experience which are not in harmony with reality: of illusion, evil, imperfection of every kind. By false desires and false thoughts man has built up for himself a false universe: as a mollusc, by the deliberate and persistent absorption of lime and rejection of all else, can build up for itself a hard shell which shuts it from the external world, and only represents in a distorted and unrecognisable form the ocean from which it was obtained. This hard and wholly unnutritious shell, this one-sided secretion of the surface-consciousness, makes as it were a little cave of illusion for each separate soul. A literal and deliberate getting out of the cave must be for every mystic, as it was for Plato's prisoners, the first step in the individual hunt for reality.⁷⁴

72 Ibid., p. 195.

73 Ibid., p. 198.

74 Ibid., p. 198-199.

The language is more picturesque, but one can easily pick out the emerging conflict between the two basic modes of perception. The individuality-first perception of classical physics is being challenged by the higher level of consciousness, what the mystic calls reality, in contrast to the illusion of ordinary consciousness. Underhill puts it another way when writing

That which we call the "natural" self as it exists in the "natural" world--the "old Adam" of St. Paul--is wholly incapable of supersensual adventure. All its activities are grouped about a centre of consciousness whose correspondences are with the material world. In the moment of its awakening, it is abruptly made aware of this disability. It knows itself finite. It now aspires to the infinite. It is encased in the hard crust of individuality: it aspires to union with a larger self. It is fettered: it longs for freedom. (Emphasis ours)⁷⁵

Matter, as the principle of individuation, is here seen as the basic block to higher levels of consciousness. This is a gross oversimplification, of course. Given the convenient categories of material and spiritual it is easy to lump the higher levels of consciousness under the aegis of spirit and downgrade matter as constituting the major obstacle to unitive consciousness. The functional role of matter at both the commonsense (S-IR) and unitive mystical (C-IR) ends of the perceptual spectrum is most probably not recognized by Miss Underhill. Field theory does not mean a rejection of matter, but viewing it in a different way.

75 Loc. Cit.

However, despite the imprecision of her language and her somewhat jaundiced view of matter, Miss Underhill does make some important points when she characterizes purgation as essentially an act of "self-simplification" involving the "...remaking of character in conformity with perceived reality".⁷⁶ In this case the perceived reality is that presented by the higher or transcendental consciousness.

Purgation, or purification consists of two essential acts, "... the cleansing of that which is to remain, the stripping of that which is to be done away with".⁷⁷ This is done by the twin acts of mortification and poverty or detachment. Both of these activities function as important triggers for the release and maintenance of higher levels of consciousness.

We will save our discussion of this aspect of the mystic way for the next chapter where we will treat the mechanisms of perception that come into operation when mortification and detachment are seriously embraced. Let us now continue with the third step in mystic progression, the stage of Illumination.

76 Ibid., p. 204.

77 Loc. Cit.

c) Illumination

Perhaps the easiest way to understand the significance of the illuminative phase of mystic progress is to view it in contrast with the unitive life, the final goal of the mystic.

The real distinction between the Illuminative and the Unitive Life is that in Illumination the individuality of the subject--however profound his spiritual consciousness, however close his apparent communion with the Infinite--remains separate and intact. His heightened apprehension of reality lights up rather than obliterates the rest of his life: and may even increase his power of dealing adequately with the accidents of normal existence.⁷⁸

The stage of Illumination signifies a certain measure of success and skill has been achieved and the first-fruits have been won. But this is not yet the final goal.

He (the mystic) has now got through preliminaries; detached himself from his chief entanglements; re-oriented his instinctive life. The result is a new and solid certitude about God, and his own soul's relation to God: an "enlightenment" in which he is adjusted to new standards of conduct and thought. In the traditional language of asceticism he is "proficient" but not yet perfect. He achieves a real vision and knowledge, a conscious harmony with the divine World of Becoming: not yet self-loss in the Principle of Life [...] This character distinguishes almost every first-hand description of illumination: and it is this which marks it off from mystic union in all its forms. All pleasurable and exalted states of mystic consciousness in which the sense of I-hood persists, in which there is a loving and joyous relation between the Absolute as object and the self as subject, fall under the head of Illumination...⁷⁹

78 Ibid., p. 246.

79 Ibid., p. 234.

Such a statement might, at first glance, appear to conflict with the first attribute of consciousness listed by LeShan, in the sense that it would seem to reduce LeShan's categories to descriptions of the Illuminative rather than the Unitive state. This is because LeShan insists in his description on the retention of a sense of individuality.

However, when characterizing the stage of illumination, Miss Underhill seems to be describing a state of awareness in which the mystic retains a sense of personal identity in terms of subject-object individuality, rather than identity based on relatedness as primary, even though the Illuminative state also includes the beginnings of the strong sense for relatedness and being-a-part-of-the-total-pattern.

A final characteristic of the stage of Illumination is what Miss Underhill termed "The Illuminated Vision of the World".

Blake's "To see a world in a grain of sand," Tennyson's "Flower in the crannied wall," Vaughan's "Each bush and oak doth know I AM," and the like, are exact though over-quoted reports of "things seen" in this state of consciousness, this "simple vision of pure love": the value of which is summed up in Eckhart's profound saying, "The meanest thing that one knows in God--for instance, if one could understand a flower as it has its Being in God--this would be a higher thing than the whole world!" Mystical poets of the type of Wordsworth and Walt Whitman seem to possess in a certain degree this form of illumination. It is this which Bucke, the American psychologist, analysed under the name of "Cosmic Consciousness." It is seen at its full development in the mystical experiences of Boehme, Fox, and Blake.⁸⁰

80 Ibid., p. 255.

In the Illuminative phase a harmony is set up between the mystic and Life in all its forms, but the actual merging has not yet taken place. This remains as the final mystic achievement--the Unitive Life.

d) The Unitive Life

At this point, Miss Underhill's descriptions begin to break down and she is clearer in her rejection of pantheism than in an accurate portrayal of the quality of consciousness characterizing this final stage of union. What does seem apparent in the available evidence, is that a somewhat different sense of self is experienced by the mystic at this level--different in that individuality remains, but is less important than the quality of unitive consciousness.

The mystic [...] would say that his long-sought correspondence with Transcendental Reality, his union with God, has now been finally established: that his self, though intact, is wholly penetrated--as a sponge by the sea--by the Ocean of Life and Love to which he has attained. "I live, yet not I but God in me." He is conscious that he is now at length cleansed of the last stains of separation, and has become, in a mysterious manner, "that which he beholds."⁸¹

The last sentence reminds one of the conversation which is reputed to have taken place when a student asked the Zen-master, Yasutani-Roshi, what was the principal enemy that prevented him from attaining enlightenment. The reply:

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 417-418.

Your enemy is your discursive thinking, which leads you to differentiate yourself on one side of an imaginary boundary from what is not you on the other side of this non-existent line [...] Consider these flowers in the bowl on this table. You look at them and exclaim: "Oh, how beautiful these flowers are!" That is one kind of seeing. But when you see them, not as apart from you but as yourself, you are enlightened.⁸²

e) A Final Note on Progression in Unitive Consciousness and the Problem of Language

It is interesting that in his well known description of the characteristics of mystic experience, William James lists ineffability as the first, and perhaps most important mark of such heightened states of consciousness.

Ineffability.--The handiest of the marks by which I classify a state of mind as mystical is negative. The subject of it immediately says that it defies expression, that no adequate report of its contents can be given in words. It follows from this that its quality must be directly experienced; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others.⁸³

In a sense, it is somewhat surprising that James should have listed ineffability as a mark of mystic experience. A little reflection indicates that ineffability is really not a characteristic of inner mystical experience as such, but rather of the attempt to communicate it. Putting this in terms of the development we have followed up to this point in the dissertation we might say that a language

82 Philip Kapleau, The Three Pillars of Zen, p. 154.

83 William James, Op. Cit., p. 292.

structure largely built upon a subject-object, individuality-first conceptualization of the universe simply breaks down in the attempt to describe higher levels of unitive experience. Hence, the alleged ineffability which is cited by James and other researchers who ran head on into this problem as soon as they got serious about trying to understand the nature of mystical consciousness.

Dr. Richard M. Bucke, M.D., the Canadian psychiatrist well known for his work Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind, had certain ineffable experiences himself and described the problem of communication as follows:

"Well," some one will say, "if these people see and know and feel so much, why don't they come out with it in plain language and give the world the benefit of it?" This is what "speech" said to Whitman: "Walt, you contain enough, why don't you let it out, then?" (193:50). But he tells us:

"When I undertake to tell the best I find I cannot
My tongue is ineffectual on its pivots,
My breath will not be obedient to its organs,
I become a dumb man" (193:179)

So Paul, when he was "caught up into paradise," heard "unspeakable words." And Dante was not able to recount the things he saw in heaven. "My vision," he says, "was greater than our speech which yields to such a sight" (72:212).⁸⁴

84 Richard M. Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind, New York, University Books, 1961, p. 65. The references are to: Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass, Philadelphia, David McKay, 1891-1892, p. 50 and 179; Dante, Paradise, Charles Eliot Norton, trans., Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin, 1892, p. 212.

Bucke clearly put his finger on the problem of language. The unitive experience was incommunicable because ordinary commonsense language was incapable of containing it. What we have described as the field-theory perception of reality is geared to the experience of patterns, and does not yet have an adequate linguistic structure to contain it. Surprisingly enough, this may be one reason why it has been the mathematicians and theoretical physicists who have pushed farthest ahead with this interpretation of reality. Perhaps their language of equations and formulae are more open to such structuring than our own speech.

Since our language is not designed for communication of patterns (but is designed to communicate the relationships of specific objects and events), we may have a clue here to the ineffability which William James reports is characteristic of information gained in the mystical state. As Gregory and Kohsen have put it: "The recognition that follows mystical perception is not the kind of recognition that can be resolved by 'Oh, that is a so and so.'"⁸⁵

It is quite likely that when Rudolf Otto characterized one aspect of the mysterium tremendum as an element which he termed the Wholly Other, he was attempting to put into some form of ordinary language an experience which the linguistic structure simply could not contain. For him, the Wholly

⁸⁵ Lawrence LeShan, Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal, p. 21. The reference is to: C. C. L. Gregory and A. Kohsen, The O-Structure: An Introduction to Psychophysical Cosmology, Church Crookham, Hampshire, Great Britain, Institute for the Study of Mental Images, 1969, p. 16.

Other was

... that which is quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, and the familiar, which therefore falls quite outside the limits of the 'canny', and is contrasted with it, filling the mind with blank wonder and astonishment.⁸⁶

However, as Otto struggled to characterize this aspect of religious experience, one wonders whether his category of the Wholly Other was based upon objective evidence of a something that is wholly other than me or whether this was simply a linguistic device used to characterize a novel experience of the self that refused to be fitted within more traditional commonsense language categories. To put this more boldly in terms of our present dissertation interests, perhaps the term Wholly Other represents an acceptable linguistic devise, used at the (S-IR), commonsense end of the consciousness spectrum to characterize those occasional experiences of (C-IR) field-theory perception which occur and for which there is no appropriate verbal or conceptual counterpart.

Otto's description indicates that this might be a possibility.

⁸⁶ Rudolf Otto, The Idea of the Holy, London, Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 26.

The truly 'mysterious' object is beyond our apprehension and comprehension, not only because our knowledge has certain irremovable limits, but because in it we come upon something inherently 'wholly other', whose kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in a wonder that strikes us chill and numb.⁸⁷

Perhaps even phrases like the non-rational, which Otto frequently employed, might also have been attempts to describe an experience which was so unusual that no ordinary language terms would fit it. If one follows this line of thinking, Otto Provides us with another intriguing clue when he notes that "... the 'void' of the eastern, like the 'nothing' of the western, mystic is a numinous ideogram of the 'wholly other'".⁸⁸ It may very well be that all such terms are really verbal attempts to communicate a mode of field-theory awareness at the S-IR, commonsense level of perception and experience.

Summary and Conclusions

What in general, now, has been the purpose of this chapter and what preliminary conclusions may be drawn in order to illuminate our investigation of the various thesis hypotheses? We can say, first, that we have tried to indicate some of the sources establishing the fact that unitive

87 Ibid., p. 28.

88 Ibid., p. 30.

consciousness in some form or other represents the core of mystic experience, and hence, of primary religious experience. Despite various overbelief interpretations which are brought to such heightened moments of awareness, the organismic foundation for religious consciousness seems to lie in some form of unitive experience.

Secondly, we have made an effort to review selected contemporary research that attempts to explain what is involved in the phenomenon of unitive consciousness. The pronounced shift in the perceptual field, the development of a more intense sense of self as organism-environment, the data produced by a field theory approach to reality, and the recognition that each of us constructs our own Individual Reality all combine to give a better understanding for what is involved in the development of unitive consciousness.

The data presented in this chapter should make it quite clear that the generation of unitive awareness depends to a large extent on the degree to which one can break or transform certain perceptual constancies and subject-object categories which bind a person to a narrow and somewhat restricted way of relating to himself and the world around him. The sense of self must be transformed before there can be any progression toward heightened states of unitive consciousness.

How is the sense of self transformed? What are some of the actual mechanics of the shift in perceptual constancies involved in the development of unitive consciousness? What are the conditions under which these alterations in consciousness contribute to fuller human functioning? These are the questions which yet remain to be answered. The composite picture of unitive consciousness developed in this chapter provides a kind of introductory framework for the more detailed material that is to follow.

Let us now proceed one step further and discuss research in progress on the actual production of altered states of consciousness--including unitive awareness.

CHAPTER III

THE PRODUCTION OF UNITIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

The whole drift of my education goes to persuade me that the world of our present consciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and that those other worlds must contain experiences which have a meaning for our life also; and that although in the main their experiences and those of this world keep discrete, yet the two become continuous at certain points, and higher energies filter in.¹

With these words and a few final reflections William James closed his chapter of Conclusions in The Varieties of Religious Experience. Let us now turn our attention to those "certain points" where other energies and states of consciousness somehow arise in us. What hypotheses are currently available to explain the occurrence of these moments of altered consciousness? What triggers a person so that these "higher energies" make their impact felt in life?

The purpose of this chapter will be to outline and comment on several of the techniques used within religious and mystical traditions in order to facilitate movement in the direction of heightened unitive awareness. The term production is used in the chapter heading to indicate that the subject matter under discussion deals with a more or less

¹ William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Mentor Books, New York, New American Library, 1958, p. 391.

voluntary manipulation of perception and cognitive processes in order to deliberately achieve an altered state of consciousness.

After a few introductory remarks dealing with the nature of triggering mechanisms we will present a basic outline of five fundamental categories for organizing the means used to produce altered states of consciousness. This will be followed by a discussion of the phenomenon of deautomatization which represents a creative and original explanation of the mechanics of perception shift involved in the production of unitive consciousness. Finally, the deautomatizing effects of contemplative meditation, renunciation, and the use of drugs will be considered.

This chapter will lay a foundation for our consideration of the conditions under which the development of unitive consciousness contributes to fuller human functioning. In the case of nearly all the material developed in the present chapter, it would seem that there is no necessary or inevitable connection between use of the techniques described in these pages and movement in the direction of constructive personality change and fuller human functioning. Indeed, as we shall see in the next chapter, there is every reason to indicate that the use of many of these techniques for altering consciousness, especially when they are employed by fundamentally incongruent people, tends to result in greater

alienation rather than constructive development. But let us begin with our consideration of some of these basic techniques.

Whether the unitive experience and altered form of consciousness associated with mystic phenomena is explained in terms of the availability of higher energies, the progression toward a field theory approach to reality, or some other perhaps equally plausible hypothesis, in most instances the theistic mystics will prefer a more supernaturalist explanation. For them the causal influence of God is considered directly responsible for alterations in consciousness.

According to mystics, these experiences are different because they pertain to a higher transcendent reality. What is perceived is said to come from another world, or at least another dimension. Although such a possibility cannot be ruled out, many of the phenomena can be understood as representing an unusual mode of perception, rather than an unusual external stimulus.²

Without denying that an "an unusual mode of perception" can be operative within a context where some form of faith is also an important ingredient of unitive experience, our purpose here will be to investigate the more natural interpretation in order to see what light it can shed on possible factors involved in religious consciousness.

We must begin by admitting that any serious attempt to compile a comprehensive list of precise triggering

² Arthur J. Diekman, "De-automatization and the Mystic Experience", in Psychiatry, Vol. 29, No. 4, 1966a, p. 333.

mechanisms or situations responsible for moving a person in the direction of higher states of unitive consciousness would seem to be a hopeless undertaking. Abraham Maslow has pointed out that even in his studies "peak experiences are more common than the triggers that set them off".³ Triggers of all higher states of consciousness, creativity, inspiration and transcendent experience are generally highly individualized.

Dr. Leonid L. Vasiliev, is an internationally recognized physiologist and chairman of Physiology at the University of Leningrad who has turned much of his considerable talent and effort to the study of psychic phenomena. He is described as having spoken of "inspiration" triggers, which are often associated with some form of transcendent or unitive experience, in the following manner:

³ Abraham H. Maslow, The Psychology of Religious Awareness, (S-209-1), Big Sur Recordings, 117 Mitchell Blvd., San Rafael, CA 94903.

The way in which gifted people can turn on their inspiration interested parapsychologist Vasiliev. The "magic charm" he found was personal and subjective in the extreme. Some people, like Rachmaninoff, take a walk in the country, others lie down with their heads pointing north. You might put on a special smock, pray, read a book, drink, hold your breath, crystal gaze, swim, sharpen pencils, rub a ring. Vasiliev thought that all the infinite antics people go through serve to click off a highly individualized conditioned response. At some point in the past you experienced a burst of inspiration. The mind casts about for something that "caused" it, Vasiliev theorized. You light on something that was probably not really a cause. But it becomes a "cause" if it is ritually repeated every time inspiration is desired. According to Vasiliev, Schiller always kept rotting apples in his desk. He maintained he couldn't write without smelling them. Vasiliev believed Schiller must have conceived or written a brilliant passage one day in the autumn when apples lay going to seed on the ground. The tangy-musty smell became a spring to Schiller's inspiration.⁴

Marghanita Laski devoted a large section of her work on ecstasy to the study of triggers and defined them as "circumstances preceding ecstatic experiences and probably standing in a causal relationship to such experiences".⁵ But beyond such a general description she concluded that it was "a waste of time to seek for some factor or factors that triggers must have in common".⁶ Her overall conclusion about the high degree of individuality in triggering mechanisms

⁴ Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder, Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain, New York, Bantam Books, 1970, p. 158.

⁵ Marghanita Laski, Ecstasy: A Study of Some Secular and Religious Experiences, London, Cresset Press, 1961, p. 213.

⁶ Loc. Cit.

parallels that of both Maslow and Vasiliev.⁷

William James cited several examples of highly personalized triggering devices, but perhaps the most striking was one in which Tennyson wrote of his experience as follows:

"I have never had any revelations through anaesthetics, but a kind of waking trance--this for lack of a better word--I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words--where death was an almost laughable impossibility--the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?"⁸

The ritualization of a supposed trigger is a sure sign that a person has moved beyond the stage of spontaneous experiences of heightened consciousness to the serious effort to insure that these states may be acquired more or less at will. Tennyson's silent repetition of his own name is an example of such an effort. As Vasiliev theorized, whether it was originally a causal factor or not, it soon became one when the poet seriously sought to recapture his earlier mood

⁷ The ritualization of supposed triggers mentioned in the Vasiliev interview is an interesting point and probably a fruitful one to pursue. Some research has been done in this area and it looks promising. Cf., for example, George I. Brown, "A Second Study in the Teaching of Creativity", in Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 35, No. 1, Winter 1965, p. 39-54.

⁸ William James, Op. Cit., p. 295.

and unitive experience.

The specific content of any trigger may be highly individualized and unique, and hence, as Laski has pointed out, escape easy categorization. Nonetheless, some fruitful general observations can be made about triggering situations insofar as they affect perception and perhaps exert some causal influence on unitive modes of consciousness.

1. The Production of Altered States of Consciousness

The research of Dr. Arnold M. Ludwig is representative of much of the work being initiated today on the study of unusual shifts in perception. He has described an altered state of consciousness (ASC) as

... any mental state(s), induced by various physiological, psychological, or pharmacological maneuvers or agents, which can be recognized subjectively by the individual himself (or by an objective observer of the individual) as representing a sufficient deviation in subjective experience or psychological functioning from certain general norms for that individual during alert, waking consciousness. This sufficient deviation may be represented by a greater preoccupation than usual with internal sensations or mental processes, changes in the formal characteristics of thought, and impairment of reality testing to various degrees.⁹

Ludwig acknowledges that such a general definition is filled with pitfalls, but he feels that these are more than compensated

⁹ Arnold M. Ludwig, "Altered States of Consciousness", in Archives of General Psychiatry, Vol. 15, Sept. 1966, p. 225.

for by the wide range of clinical phenomena that can then be studied.

His research then led him to formulate a basic premise which underlies his study of these unusual forms of perception and which he stated as follows:

ASCs may be produced in any setting by a wide variety of agents or maneuvers which interfere with the normal inflow of sensory or proprioceptive stimuli, the normal outflow of motor impulses, the normal "emotional tone," or the normal flow and organization of cognitive processes. There seems to be an optimal range of exteroceptive stimulation necessary for the maintenance of normal, waking consciousness, and levels of stimulation either above or below this range appear conducive to the production of ASCs.
(Emphasis ours)¹⁰

Any dramatic change in the accustomed nutriment for one's more or less habitual patterns of perception seems to be largely responsible for shifts in consciousness and the sense of Individual Reality which we have previously discussed. Perhaps this is one explanation for the serious mystic's almost savage attack on his usual sense patterns. He has had a taste of what he chooses to call a higher reality (or indeed Reality itself as opposed to Illusion) and in seeking to make this experience a more stable part of his life he tries to so alter his perception that he can see more clearly. He therefore attempts to move out beyond the "optimal range of exteroceptive stimulation necessary for the maintenance of

10 Loc. Cit.

normal, waking consciousness", and through the use of his ascetical and contemplative practices he tries to ingrain a different pattern, substituting what he considers to be a higher mode of perception in place of the so-called normal, waking consciousness.

This phrase "normal, waking consciousness" is one that deserves close attention in the light of our previous discussion of commonsense vs. field theory perception. The question must be asked whether "normal, waking consciousness" is simply a synonym for the commonsense view of reality, and whether any mode of awareness that exceeds the defined boundaries of this particular perceptual constancy is described as an altered state of consciousness. If this is so, then I believe one can legitimately question the restricted use of the term normal as adequate for this context. Is the commonsense or classical physics view of reality any more normal than the field theory view? One can certainly speak of the prevailing view or the most widespread view, or even the usual or habitual view. But to equate the usual with normal seems to be drawing a more far-reaching conclusion that is warranted by the evidence. For all we know, despite all their apparent unusualness there may be certain altered states of consciousness that are quite normal for the human species. Furthermore, one might even hypothesize, when taking a broader view of human evolution, that any slowdown in the

appearance of these so-called altered states because of social pressure or lack of acceptance, might in the long run constitute what could be called an abnormal situation.

If by normal, waking consciousness we mean the average more or less habitual state of consciousness enjoyed by people today, and the overall context of Dr. Ludwig's research seems to indicate that this is the sense he intends, then we can go on to examine the five general categories he has developed to organize the various ways of triggering altered states of consciousness. These general categories do not descend to specifics, something which Laski, Maslow, and Vasiliev have noted is probably an impossibility, but they provide us with a convenient way of cataloguing into groups the more highly individualized methods that have been and continue to be used to achieve different states of consciousness.

Ludwig describes his first category as:

A. Reduction of Exteroceptive Stimulation and/or Motor Activity.--Under this category are included mental states resulting primarily from the absolute reduction of sensory input, the change in patterning of sensory data, or constant exposure to repetitive, monotonous stimulation. A drastic reduction of motor activity also may prove an important contributing factor.¹¹

¹¹ Ibid., p. 226.

Following Hebb,¹² Ludwig feels that "... varied and diversified environmental stimulation appears necessary for the maintenance of normal cognitive, perceptual, and emotional experience".¹³ When an individual is deprived of the normal nutriment for his more or less habitual mode of sensory awareness, other forms of consciousness--often described as mental aberrations are likely to occur. One wonders what effect the more severe forms of sensory isolation practiced by certain ascetics and saints in the long history of religious expression has had on their perception which was then interpreted in light of the then prevailing overbelief.

The second category of methods employed to stimulate various altered expressions of consciousness is the exact opposite of the first:

B. Increase of Exteroceptive Stimulation and/or Motor Activity and/or Emotion.-- Under this category are included excitatory mental states resulting primarily from sensory overload or bombardment, which may or may not be accompanied by strenuous physical activity or exertion. Profound emotional arousal and mental fatigue may be major contributing factors.¹⁴

Ludwig lists as instances of ASCs induced by sensory overload such states as those produced by brainwashing, the emotional

12 D. O. Hebb, "The Motivating Effects of Exteroceptive Stimulation", in The American Psychologist, Vol. 13, 1958, p. 109-113.

13 Arnold M. Ludwig, Op. Cit., p. 225.

14 Ibid., p. 226.

contagion in a mob setting, conversion experiences during revivalistic meetings, and shamanistic or prophetic trance during tribal ceremonies. One might also include the use of multi-colored lights and sound employed by various discotheques to induce a certain mental state in their patrons.

The third category is of special interest to those engaged in the study of specifically religious experience:

C. Increased Alertness or Mental Involvement.--

Included under this category are mental states which appear to result primarily from focused or selective hyperalertness with resultant peripheral hypoalertness over a sustained period of time.¹⁵

Many of the traditional forms of meditation or contemplation depend upon some sort of direct or modified use of this particular method as an integral part of the activity of praying. The method may not be consciously intended as such, but it is nearly always operative in meditation or contemplation and hence its influence must be carefully taken into consideration when studying the altered state of consciousness associated with the activity of prayer. Ludwig notes that the ASCs associated with this method

15 Loc. Cit.

... may arise from the following activities: prolonged vigilance during sentry duty or crow's watch; prolonged observation of a radar screen; fervent praying; intense mental absorption in a task, such as reading, writing or problem solving; total mental involvement in listening to a dynamic or charismatic speaker; and even from attending to one's amplified breath sounds, or the prolonged watching of a revolving drum, metronome, or stroboscope.¹⁶

Certain forms of Zen meditation and yoga stress consciousness of one's breathing and various exercises associated with it.

Closely associated with focused or selective hyper-alertness in many forms of meditation is the following fourth method:

D. Decreased Alertness or Relaxation of Critical Faculties.--Grouped under this category are mental states which appear to occur mainly as a result of what might best be described as a "passive state of mind," in which active goal-directed thinking is minimal.¹⁷

Under this grouping Ludwig lists many of the more religious forms of consciousness--"mystical, transcendental, or revelatory states (e.g., satori, samadhi, nirvana, cosmic consciousness) attained through passive meditation or occurring spontaneously during the relaxation of one's critical faculties."¹⁸

In a later section of this chapter we will look at an example of the combination of these two last methods as they

16 Loc. Cit.

17 Ibid., p. 227.

18 Loc. Cit.

were used in an experimental setting to determine the effects of a certain form of contemplation on the state of consciousness of those who employed it.

The final method for inducing altered states is directly related to drug use and/or changes in body chemistry.

E. Presence of Somatopsychological Factors.--Included under this heading are mental states primarily resulting from alterations in body chemistry or neurophysiology. These alterations may be deliberately induced or may result from conditions over which the individual has little or no control.¹⁹

So much for a brief outline of general groupings that can be conveniently used to categorize many of the more highly individualized and often unique methods used to achieve various altered forms of consciousness--among which are the unitive states we have been discussing. Let us now turn our attention to the next important question. Why do these various methods produce altered states? What hypothetical explanations are available to explain the mechanics of perception change that are involved? For the moment disregarding religious overbelief interpretations of transformation in consciousness, we must try to discern some of the actual dynamics at work in the shift in perceptual constancies which seems to be associated with movement into more heightened modes of unitive consciousness.

19 Loc. Cit.

2. Deautomatization and Unitive Consciousness.

Arthur J. Diekman²⁰ has developed what he describes as "a psychological model of the mystic experience based on the assumptions that meditation and renunciation are primary techniques for producing it, and that the process can be conceptualized as one of deautomatization".²¹ The particular approach taken by Dr. Diekman is quite innovative and departs from the usual explanation of mystic phenomena found in most psychological and psychoanalytic literature. Instead of imposing the model of "a regression to the early infant-mother symbiotic relationship"²² as a blanket explanation for the unitive experience, Diekman has chosen to examine the "attentional mechanisms in perception and cognition"²³ as grounding the transformed sense of self occurring in mystical phenomena. Furthermore, he has isolated contemplative meditation and

20 Arthur J. Diekman, MD, is presently on leave from the University of Colorado Medical School where he is associate professor of Psychiatry. For many years he has conducted research in meditation, mystical experience and other altered states of consciousness; he is a student of Zen Buddhism. At the present time he is employed as a group specialist by the city of San Francisco and is in private practice. He is program chairman for the Fourth Conference on Altered States of Consciousness sponsored by the Menninger Clinic.

21 Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 324.

22 Ibid., p. 328.

23 Loc. Cit.

renunciation as two important triggering mechanisms moving a person in the direction of this altered state of consciousness. He has also specified the unique aspect of mystic awareness as being constituted by what we have already described as unitive experience. "Experiencing one's self as one with the universe or with God, is the hallmark of the mystic experience, regardless of its cultural context."²⁴

I use Dr. Diekman's material because I feel that it represents one of the better explanations of what occurs in many of the unusual shifts in perception associated with mystic experience and unitive consciousness. I am not convinced that his theory, which is the result of much experimentation and research, is necessarily a total explanation of unitive consciousness. I believe that it must be critically evaluated and I intend to do this in the next chapters by comparing it with the research of Dr. Carl Rogers and Dr. Eugene Gendlin.

However, the importance of Diekman's work cannot be overstressed. There is no question but what he does explain the mechanics of perception shift operative in many of the unusual alterations in consciousness resulting from meditation and the practices of asceticism. I do not believe that he has sufficiently dealt with the question of whether such changes in perception necessarily result in any increase or

24 Ibid., p. 335.

diminishment of fuller human functioning. But this was not the point of his research and his work should not be judged on the basis of whether or not he deals with the question of human development.

My own feeling is that when Diekman's work is placed alongside that of Rogers, and an original attempt made to derive an over-all approach to the phenomenon of unitive consciousness in religion from this combined research, then, Diekman's conclusions become even more important as part of a total picture. Given the current fascination with Zen, Yoga, Transcendental Meditation, drugs, Revivalism and a host of other consciousness expanding techniques which are being experimented with by youth and the various churches, it is vital that we become aware of the mechanics of perception which operate when there is a deliberate manipulation of attention. Such knowledge is crucial because a form of unitive consciousness can appear to result from the use of such techniques and exercises, but, as I mentioned earlier in the dissertation hypothesis, there seems to be no necessary connection between such unusual alterations in consciousness and fuller human functioning. But let us now come to the point of deautomatization and leave our reflections on human development for the next chapter.

Diekman's concept of deautomatization is a direct development stemming from Heinz Hartmann's earlier description

of the automatization of motor behavior which points out how once a particular response has been learned and integrated, many of the individual steps which form an integral part of the over-all action gradually slip from consciousness and are performed automatically.

In well-established achievements they (motor apparatuses) function automatically: the integration of the somatic systems involved in the action is automatized, and so is the integration of the individual mental acts involved in it. With increasing exercise of the action its intermediate steps disappear from consciousness [...] not only motor behavior but perception and thinking, too, show automatization... (Emphasis ours)²⁵

Describing the phenomenon of automatization another way, Diekman notes that it "... performs the function of eliminating details and intermediate steps of awareness so that attention is freed for other purpose".²⁶ Furthermore, this economizing of attention is not merely restricted to the area of motor activity but functions at the level of perception and thought processes as well. Where a good deal of conscious attention may need to be initially expended in the development of perception patterns or specific thought processes, as these become ingrained and more habitual,

²⁵ Ibid., p. 329. Diekman is quoting from Hartmann. Cf.: Heinz Hartmann, Ego Psychology and the Problem of Adaptation, New York, International University Press, 1958, p. 88-91.

²⁶ Arthur J. Diekman, "Implications of Experimentally Induced Contemplative Meditation", in The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, Vol. 142, No. 2, Feb. 1966, p. 111.

certain of their elements also become more automatic.

However, a price is paid for this conservation of energy. Along with the time-saving automatization we also tend to develop set categories and ways of organizing and responding to the world around us. We select some stimuli and exclude others, depending upon the demands of our world and our own needs. We then build our own Individual Reality (IR) by picking out what is important for a response, given the type of world we must live in. We organize this selected data into various thought categories and habitual types of programmed perception and patterned response. Repetition than ingrains the particular automatizations and categories associated with them, but often at the expense of full-focused contact with the external world.

Our previous experience with objects strengthens our category systems. We expect cars to make a certain noise, traffic lights to be a certain color, food to smell a certain way, and certain people to say certain things. But what we actually experience, according to Bruner and to others, is the category which is evoked by a particular stimulus, and not the occurrence in the external world. (Emphasis ours)²⁷

The categories and organization of Individual Reality (IR) along particular lines is supported in large part by automatizations in perception which hold at the level of

²⁷ Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, On the Psychology of Meditation, New York, The Viking Press, 1971, p. 181. The reference is to: Jerome Bruner, "On Perceptual Readiness", in Psychological Review, Vol. 64, 1957, p. 123-152.

conscious awareness those elements of our world that must be deliberately attended to, while allowing other intermediate and less important steps and elements to slip from consciousness. As this process continues in life it becomes easier to appreciate the fact that an experience of so-called objective reality is not as easy to define as we might at first like to think that it is. This is because

Our experience is [...] an interactive process between the external world and the continuously revised models of our categories. We can select input, tune ourselves to relevant input, categorize, and finally construct our awareness from these and from our past experiences, our associations, thoughts, and emotional states.²⁸

The use of the phrase "construct our awareness" reaches to the very heart of the mystic effort and the age-old fascination with the prospects of altering consciousness in order to achieve heightened states of unitive experience. The implications of automatization of perception and the subsequent organization of Individual Reality (IR) that depends on it has created a continual challenge for mystics, sages, philosophers and spiritual leaders of every age and geographical location. This is because "If awareness is a construction and not a 'registration' of the external world, then by altering the nature of the construction process our awareness can

28 Ibid., p. 189.

be changed".²⁹

In juxtaposing the two terms construction and registration I do not intend to imply that there is no genuine registration of external reality as it is in itself. My own point will eventually be that the fully functioning person is more capable of genuine, open registration than is the defensive and less congruent individual who must constantly construct his world in order to protect himself. The congruent man or woman has less need to manipulate reality and is less pressured to select. Because they are usually more comfortable with themselves, they can let other people and situations be themselves too and thereby be more realistic testers of external reality as it is in itself.

However, to the extent that either a lack of congruence or simply the overwhelming demands of getting a job done dictates that each of us automatize our perception, build our categories, and, in general, construct our Individual Reality, to that same extent we incur a certain diminishment in our contact with both ourselves and the world around us. The possibility of greater unity is inhibited by defensiveness and the ordinary demands of daily life.

This leads to the question of altering the so-called construction process by voluntarily manipulating attention

29 Ibid., p. 172.

and deliberately directing it toward the intermediate steps of automatized motor behavior, perception or thinking that have slipped from consciousness. This is accomplished through a process known as deautomatization.

De-automatization is an undoing of the automatizations of apparatuses--both means and goal structures --directed toward the environment. De-automatization is, as it were, a shake-up which can be followed by an advance or a retreat in the level of organization [...] Some manipulation of the attention directed toward the functioning of an apparatus is necessary if it is to be de-automatized.³⁰

Diekman describes the manipulation when noting that "de-automatization may be conceptualized as the undoing of automatization, presumably by reinvesting actions and percepts with attention".³¹ In other words, the hypothesis of deautomatization is that automatized perception and the thought patterns or categories it supports may be broken down when attention is deliberately focused on those perceptions associated with intermediate steps in the automatization process which have slipped from consciousness. As we shall soon see, this is an important function of most forms of contemplative meditation and renunciation practiced by mystics and religious persons in order to help in the

³⁰ Merton M. Gill and Margaret Brenman, Hypnosis and Related States: Psychoanalytic Studies in Regression, New York, International University Press, 1959, p. 178, as quoted in Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 329.

³¹ Arthur J. Diekman, "De-automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 329.

attainment of heightened forms of unitive consciousness.

The direct connection of this process of deautomatization with the release of unitive consciousness is developed as follows:

The studies of Werner, Von Senden, and Shapiro suggest that development 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 and stimulus qualities to the exclusion of others. If the automatization underlying that organization is reversed, or temporarily suspended, aspects of reality that were formerly unavailable might then enter awareness. Unity may in fact be a property of the real world that becomes perceptible via the techniques of meditation and renunciation, or under the special conditions, as yet unknown, that create the spontaneous, brief mystic experience of untrained persons. (Emphasis ours)³²

It is Diekman's contention that studies in perceptual development indicate that perception patterns and imagery gradually change their functional character as they are forced more and more to serve the operation of abstract reasoning. As a child matures, the demands of an adult world dictate that much of the pre-logical and somewhat primitive sense for the unity of reality and the tied-in-ness of the sensing organism with its environment be sacrificed in order to develop the capacity for abstraction, logical thinking, etc. As a result, the vividness and unitary aspect of much sense imagery

³² Ibid., p. 335.

... becomes essentially subject to the exigencies of abstract thought. Once the image changes in function and becomes an instrument in reflective thought, its structure will also change. It is only through such structural change that the image can serve as an instrument of expression in abstract mental activity. This is why, of necessity, the sensuousness, fulness of detail, the color and vivacity of the image must fade.³³

Basing his reflections on studies of perception and imagery in children and primitives, Diekman feels that he has uncovered a close similarity between the unitive experience of de-differentiation found in the mystic experience and that which is characteristic of small children and primitive peoples. He feels that deautomatization should reverse the development of automatization

... in the direction of primitive thought, and it is striking to note that classical accounts of mystic experience emphasize the phenomenon of Unity. Unity can be viewed as a de-differentiation that merges all boundaries until the self is no longer experienced as a separate object and customary perceptual and cognitive distinctions are no longer applicable. In this respect, the mystic literature is consistent with the de-automatization hypothesis.³⁴

The main limitation I find in this aspect of Diekman's explanation is not the contention that deautomatization breaks the pattern organizing perception to serve the needs of

³³ Heinz Werner, Comparative Psychology of Mental Development, New York, International University Press, 1957, p. 152, as quoted in Arthur J. Diekman, "De-automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 330.

³⁴ Arthur J. Diekman, "De-automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 330.

abstract thought and a particular orientation to reality. Rather, it is the assumption that any kind of de-differentiation, unitive experience or vividness of sensory image resulting from deautomatization necessarily implies a regression of some sort to a child-like or even savage state of being. I feel that we must question the statement that deautomatization results in a shift toward "an organization preceding the analytic, abstract intellectual mode typical of present day adult thought".³⁵ It seems to me that there is an implied reductionism in this explanation of deautomatization which is essentially unnecessary to the positive contribution this theory can make. If automatization is broken down it does not necessarily imply that we regress to a primitive state or an organization "preceding the analytic" before continuing to move ahead again (or regressing even further).

It is unfortunate that in-depth studies of adults whose perception and thought patterns are more highly characterized by the C-IR or field theory mode of perception have not been made to compare with the studies of perception in primitives and children. Such a comparison might indicate that the easy reduction of deautomatization into what are

35 Ibid., p. 329-330.

considered to be more primitive patterns may be a gross oversimplification.

Abraham Maslow's studies of adults who were capable of what he called being-cognition and the field theory mode of perception associated with it might serve as a representative group to compare with the primitives and children. I feel that Dr. Lawrence LeShan was far more precise in his evaluation of Maslow's work when he wrote of a "change in the formal perceptual system" of those experiencing peak moments rather than characterizing this as a form of regression to previous more primitive or primary levels of consciousness.

A major aspect of the peak experience, as defined and developed by Abraham Maslow, is the change in the formal perceptual system which the individual is using. In the peak experience, the self and the environment (to its most distant conceived parts) are perceived as functioning as a unit. There is no "here-is-where-I-am-and-here-is-where-the-rest-of-the-universe-begins" quality about the perceptions, but rather an "I-am-a-part-of-a-dynamic-everything" quality. Individual unities remain, but their uniqueness is perceived as distinctly secondary to their relational qualities. In a formal perceptual and organizing sense, the person in a peak experience has shifted from the S-IR to a system at least much closer to the C-IR. He has distinctly moved along the spectrum that unites and relates these two states of being.³⁶

If anything, LeShan places the form of unitary consciousness under consideration further along the spectrum rather than

³⁶ Lawrence LeShan, Toward a General Theory of the Paranormal: A Report of Work in Progress, New York, Parapsychology Foundation, Inc., 1969, p. 64.

locating it at an earlier stage.

The point I am attempting to make is not to reject the theory of deautomatization, which I feel is valid enough as far as it goes in the explanation of some of the mechanics of perception involved when altered states of consciousness arise within a person. Rather, I am simply questioning one aspect of the hypothetical explanation of deautomatization--namely the heavy dependence on studies of imagery in children and primitives. Just because these two groups may happen to have strong experiences of de-differentiation does not necessarily mean that the explanation of every similar adult experience must somehow be reduced to this earlier model.

Diekman readily admits that those who characterize mystic experience, especially the de-differentiation associated with dissolution of the subject-object dichotomy, as regression to an experience of the mother-infant relationship or to a more primitive form of consciousness, do not sufficiently take into consideration that now it is an adult undergoing such an experience.

Rather than speaking of a return to childhood, it is more accurate to say that the undoing of automatic perceptual and cognitive structures permits a gain in sensory intensity and richness at the expense of abstract categorization and differentiation. One might call the direction regressive in a developmental sense, but the actual experience is probably not within the psychological scope of any child. It is a de-automatization occurring in an adult mind, and the experience gains its richness from adult memories and functions now subject to a different mode of consciousness.³⁷

Perhaps Diekman is closest to the truth in this statement. To speak of "a gain in sensory intensity at the expense of abstract categorization and differentiation" is, to my way of thinking, a better way of explaining what happens when one undoes automatic perceptual and cognitive structures. The explanation does not go beyond the facts of the experience, whereas it seems to me that bringing in children and primitives does.

One reason why unitive consciousness has been so universally prized by mankind is that it includes liberation from confining, stereotyped (automatized) modes of perception. As Merleau-Ponty pointed out, man is self-transcending movement. But an integral part of the experience of self-transcendence is the enjoyment of a mode of perception and thought which allows us to experience being more united with rather than separated off from what we call the external world.

³⁷ Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 331.

There has always been, therefore, an instinctive attempt on the part of man to continually deautomatize perception, to really be aware, to move beyond the fogging, even dulling quality of Individual Reality that comes when we allow our familiar categories to be the object of perception rather than the thing in itself. All such liberating activity, whether deliberately sought in meditation or other more pedestrian forms, is fundamentally a mark of perhaps one of the most distinctive characteristics of man--his transcendentality.

In many ways the aims of the disciplines of meditation--total attention to the moment, "dishabituation," "extended" awareness--are the same ones we seek in many of our "ordinary" activities. We buy new products, new clothes, new records; we slightly change our surroundings to attempt to return them to awareness. Dangerous sports, for example, engage our awareness and bring us into the present moment in which we think of nothing else but the activity in which we are engaged. We arrange the conditions so that it is absolutely necessary for us to pay full attention to what is taking place at that moment. When we race a sports car or motorcycle, or ski or ride a toboggan down a slope, or sky-dive, anything less than complete awareness to the moment may lead to injury or to death. The necessity of opening up our awareness is perhaps one of the reasons people are willing to risk injury or even their lives in dangerous sport.³⁸

Such opening up of awareness would seem to be an indispensable ingredient for the unitive experiences and field theory modes of perception which we discussed earlier.

³⁸ Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, Op. Cit., p. 204.

The same type of effort at renewing perception in the interests of transcendence also occurs in the creations of artists.

Much of Western art is [...] an attempt to "cleanse" perception, to return our awareness to things that are seen automatically. One critic considers the function of art to "make strange" ordinary objects, to allow us to see our usual surroundings as if they were "strange"--as if for the first time. The recent trend in Pop Art is an example. There is an important difference in the way we look at a Warhol sculpture of a Campbell's soup can in a gallery and at the same object at home. By presenting ordinary objects in a context that demands that we attend to them, we "see" them in a new way. We do not immediately call up our customary category of "soup can," in which we ignore everything but the particular label ("is it vegetable or noodle?"). We now "look" at the shape, the lettering, the way the light falls on the surface of the can. We are brought out of our ordinary responses of ignoring the object. Looking at a common object in a gallery is a means of deautomatizing our awareness of it.³⁹

From this it can easily be seen that it is a mistake to relegate efforts at deautomatization to the so-called mystical end of the spectrum of human consciousness. To the extent that each of us seeks in ordinary ways during the course of our daily life to expand our perception and consciousness, we are, in a very real sense, already participating in that mystic quest which has been largely identified in the popular mind with the activities of a few selected individuals throughout human history.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 205-206.

Before concluding our opening remarks on the phenomenon of deautomatization, two final points deserve brief mention at this time.

The first is that deautomatization is not necessarily an infallible approach to growth. Regression as well as advance may follow on the breakdown of structures. It will be useful to keep this in mind, especially in the next chapter where we will begin to discuss the relationship of congruence, healthy human growth and deautomatization. It would seem that other equally crucial factors besides mechanical shifts in perception determine whether growth or regression takes place once the initial breakdown has occurred.

A second point is that a certain degree of manipulation of perception is required if deautomatization is to take place. This can occur when conscious attention is deliberately focused over a long enough period of time on aspects of experience and perceptual patterns where much automatization has taken place. Ludwig's study of focused or selective hyper-alertness would be an example of this approach to breakdown of ingrained patterns and the resulting ASCs. However, deautomatization can also spontaneously occur when circumstances or our own state of mind momentarily break us out of our more or less habitual perceptual patterns. The Varieties of Religious Experience and similar works are filled with examples of spontaneous mystical phenomena unprepared for by the one

experiencing them and rarely repeated.

Let us now turn our attention to some of the actual techniques used by the mystics to produce deautomatization of perception and the unitive states of consciousness associated with them.

a) Contemplative Meditation

Contemplative meditation requires that the subject relinquish his customary mode of thinking and perceiving. Thoughts must be stopped, sounds and peripheral sensations put out of one's mind, and the contemplation of the meditative object be conducted in a non-analytic, non-intellectual manner.⁴⁰

Contemplative meditation of the sort which Diekman studied is not to be confused with a type of meditation frequently employed within various Christian Churches. Here discursive reason plays an important role both within the period of meditation itself as well as throughout the colloquies or periods of personal prayer verbalizations addressed to Christ, His Father, Mary, the Saints, etc. Diekman's studies of experimental meditation⁴¹ are concerned with the non-discursive contemplation of an actual object, such as a

40 Arthur J. Diekman, "Experimental Meditation", in The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, Vol. 136, No. 4, 1963, p. 330.

41 An article in addition to the one just quoted is: Arthur J. Diekman, "Implications of Experimentally Induced Contemplative Meditation", in The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, Vol. 142, No. 2, Feb. 1966, p. 101-116.

vase or flower. It is not mental prayer in the more traditional Christian understanding of this phrase.

Whether the object of meditation be a mandala, a mantram or chant, one's own breathing or some object, such as the Christian cross, which because of its meaning associations serves as a point of focus for bringing a certain stillness within and change in perception, the significant point is that the way of perceiving it serves to "reinvest the percept with attention".

Contemplation is, ideally, a nonanalytic apprehension of an object or idea--non-analytic because discursive thought is banished and the attempt is made to empty the mind of everything except the percept of the object in question.⁴²

Diekman feels that contemplative meditation functions as a significant trigger facilitating the process of deautomatization.

In reflecting on the technique of contemplative meditation, one can see that it seems to constitute just such a manipulation of attention as is required to produce de-automatization. The percept receives intense attention while the use of attention for abstract categorization and thought is explicitly prohibited. Since automatization normally accomplishes the transfer of attention from a percept or action to abstract thought activity, the meditation procedure exerts a force in the reverse direction. Cognition is inhibited in favor of perception; the active intellectual style is replaced by a receptive perceptual mode.⁴³

42 Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 327.

43 Ibid., p. 329.

Evelyn Underhill also recognized the functional role of an external object which might serve as a focal point for attention and in certain instances somehow be responsible for the spontaneous release of what she called the transcendental sense associated with unitive experience. But she was unable to explain the mechanics of perception involved and showed a deep mistrust of the experience as actually being a significant Christian way to the experience of God.

That these proceedings do effect a remarkable change in the human consciousness is proved by experience: though how and why they do it is as yet little understood. Such artificial and deliberate production of ecstasy is against the whole instinct of the Christian contemplatives; but here and there amongst them also we find instances in which ecstatic trance or lucidity, the liberation of the "transcendental sense," was inadvertently produced by purely physical means. Thus Jacob Boehme, the "Teutonic theosopher," having one day as he sat in his room "gazed fixedly upon a burnished pewter dish which reflected the sunshine with great brilliance," fell into an inward ecstasy, and it seemed to him as if he could look into the principles and deepest foundations of things. The contemplation of running water had the same effect on St. Ignatius Loyola. Sitting on the bank of a river one day, and facing the stream which was running deep, "the eyes of his mind were opened, not so as to see any kind of vision, but so as to understand and comprehend spiritual things [...] and this with such clearness that for him all these things were made new." This method of attaining to mental lucidity by a narrowing and simplification of the conscious field, finds an apt parallel in the practice of Immanuel Kant, who "found that he could better engage in philosophical thought while gazing steadily at a neighbouring church steeple."⁴⁴

44 Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, New York, Dutton, 1961, p. 58.

The deliberate focusing of attention and hyperalertness described above could be considered classic examples of the type of activity which Dr. Arnold Ludwig catalogued in his third division of means used to achieve altered states of consciousness. Whether this happens spontaneously or is a deliberate effort, as in the case of Kant gazing at the nearby church steeple, the deautomatizing effect is the same.

It must be remembered that the unusual sensory and cognitional effects associated with deautomatization of perception are not in themselves necessarily responsible for the specifically religious associations which are then connected with them. This is perhaps one reason why Miss Underhill was so careful to dissociate such experiences and the techniques which produced them from the principal means used by Christian mystics to attain their goal of union with God. Diekman comments on this point as follows:

It should not be forgotten that the techniques of contemplation and renunciation are exercised within the structure of some sort of theological schema. This schema is used to interpret and organize the experiences that occur [...] The presence of motivating and organizing conceptual structure and the support and encouragement of a teacher are undoubtedly important in helping a person to persist in the meditation exercises and to achieve the marked personality changes that can occur through success in this endeavor. Enduring personality change is made more likely by the emphasis on adapting behavior to the values and insights associated both with the doctrinal structure and with the stages of mystical experience.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 328.

We will have more to say in the next chapter about enduring personality change and the role which the quality of relationship between teacher and disciple might play in deautomatizations associated with healthy human growth.

Despite her caution regarding the seeming artificiality of liberating the transcendental sense by purely physical means, Miss Underhill did think enough of the method to propose it as an experimental way in which the average person could, on a small scale, get a taste for higher modes of consciousness. This was achieved by using some of the natural faculties which, as she said, were utilized at higher levels of mystic awareness.

All that is asked is that we shall look for a little time, in a special and undivided manner, at some simple, concrete, and external thing. This object of our contemplation may be almost anything we please: a picture, a statue, a tree, a distant hillside, a growing plant, running water, little living things. We need not, with Kant, go to the starry heavens. "A little thing the quantity of an hazel nut" will do for us, as it did for Lady Julian long ago. Remember, it is a practical experiment on which we are set; not an opportunity of pretty and pantheistic meditation.

Look, then, at this thing which you have chosen. Wilfully yet tranquilly refuse the messages which countless other aspects of the world are sending; and so concentrate your whole attention on this one act of loving sight that all other objects are excluded from the conscious field. Do not think, but as it were pour out your personality towards it: let your soul be in your eyes. Almost at once, this new method of perception will reveal unsuspected qualities in the external world. First, you will perceive about you a strange and deepening quietness; a slowing down of our feverish mental time. Next, you will become aware of a heightened significance, an intensified existence in the thing at which you look. As you, with all your

consciousness, lean out towards it, an answering current will meet yours. It seems as though the barrier between its life and your own, between subject and object, had melted away. You are merged with it, in an act of true communion: and you know the secret of its being deeply and unforgettably, yet in a way which you can never hope to express [...]

The price of this experience has been a stilling of that surface-mind, a calling in of all our scattered interests: an entire giving of ourselves to this one activity, without self-consciousness, without reflective thought. To reflect is always to distort: our minds are not good mirrors. The contemplative, on whatever level his faculty may operate, is contented to absorb and be absorbed: and by this humble access he attains to a plane of knowledge which no intellectual process can come near.

I do not suggest that this simple experiment is in any sense to be equated with the transcendental contemplation of the mystic. Yet it exercises on a small scale, and in regard to visible Nature the same natural faculties which are taken up and used--it is true upon other levels, and in subjection to the transcendental sense--in his apprehension of the Invisible Real. Though it is one thing to see truthfully for an instant the flower in the crannied wall, another to be lifted up to the apprehension of "eternal Truth, true Love and loved Eternity," yet both according to their measure are functions of the inward eye, operating in the "suspension of the mind."⁴⁶

Miss Underhill's use of the mirror metaphor to describe the quality of consciousness achieved in meditative states is a common one. The major religious traditions all speak of developing a state of awareness which "allows every stimulus to enter into consciousness devoid of our normal selection process, devoid of normal tuning and normal input

46 Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 301-302.

selection, model-building, and the normal category systems".⁴⁷ The idea is to allow reality to be in itself, to enter us as it is in such a way that we perfectly reflect what is, without distorting or transforming it through the grid of our own perceptual constancies.

The Sufi poet Omar Khayyam says: "I am a mirror and who looks at me, whatever good or bad he speaks, he speaks of himself." The contemporary Zen master, Suzuki Roshi says: "The perfect man employs his mind as a mirror, it grasps nothing, it refuses nothing, it receives but does not keep." Christ said in prayer: "A mirror I am to thee that perceivest me." The metaphor of consciousness as a mirror fits well with some of the psychologists' own metaphors. A mirror allows every input to enter equally, reflects each equally, and cannot be tuned to receive a special kind of input. It does not add anything to the input and does not turn off repetitive stimuli; it does not focus on any particular aspect of input and retune back and forth, but continuously admits all inputs equally.⁴⁸

In his investigation of experimental meditation, Diekman devised a set of instructions for his subjects which gave details about how they were to concentrate during meditation. The object in this instance was a blue vase on a table in a room set aside for the research project. The instructions closely parallel the descriptions of B-cognition and the mirror-like quality of knowledge already described.

47 Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, Op. Cit., p. 194.

48 Loc. Cit.

The purpose of these sessions is to learn about concentration. Your aim is to concentrate on the blue vase. By concentration I do not mean analyzing the different parts of the vase, or thinking a series of thoughts about the vase, or associating ideas to the vase, but rather, trying to see the vase as it exists in itself, without any connections to other things.⁴⁹

By deliberately excluding the usual ways of submitting the vase to the more utilitarian needs of abstract reasoning (who does it belong to?, what shelf will I put it on?, what color does it best match with?, what is it made of?, how can I use it?, what does it have in common with other vases?, etc.), attention was simply focused on the being of the vase as a unique entity in itself.

Eight unpaid subjects participated in the experiment which consisted of twelve sessions, each of which lasted anywhere from 15 to 35 minutes. The individual and common phenomena reported by them are worth noting insofar as they seem to give direct evidence that a certain deautomatization of perception (and the unitive experience frequently associated with it) results from the practice of contemplative meditation.

All remarked that their perception of the vase was in some way altered. More vivid was a phrase frequently employed. The adjective luminous was often used since it seemed to the subjects that after a period of concentration the vase actually

49 Arthur J. Diekman, "Experimental Meditation", p. 330.

became a source of light. Most felt that less time had elapsed than was actually recorded on the clock, and most found that they could not put the quality of their experience into words. All agreed that the sessions were quite pleasurable and remarked on a growing degree of personal attachment to or affect for the vase.

One individual reported a strong sense of merging:

One of the points that I remember most vividly is when I really began to feel, you know, almost as though the blue and I were perhaps merging, or that vase and I were. I almost got scared to the point where I found myself bringing myself back in some way from it [...]. It was as though everything was sort of merging and I was somehow losing my sense of consciousness almost.⁵⁰

Experiences of de-differentiation caused some anxiety for certain individuals: "... it lost its boundaries and I might lose mine too".⁵¹ Another noteworthy experience of de-differentiation following one of the sessions with the vase together with Diekman's interpretation was recorded as follows:

50 Ibid., p. 334.

51 Loc. Cit.

When subject B looked out the window in the sixth session [...] he gave the following description: "I don't know how to describe it, it's scattered. Things look scattered all over the lot, not hung together in any way. When I look at the background there is much in the foreground that is kind of drawing my attention. A very strong word would be clamoring for my attention. It isn't really clamoring but I don't really know how to say it, I can't settle down on any one thing [...] It looks like a call for attention from all over the lot and no way of looking at the whole or any individual part of it." (Somewhat later.) "This session strikes me as quite different [...] The view didn't organize itself in any way. For a long time it resisted my attempt to organize it so I could talk about it. There were no planes, one behind the other. There was no response to certain patterns. Everything was working at the same intensity [...] like a bad painting which I didn't know about until I got used to it so I could begin to pick out what was going on in the painting. I didn't see the order to it or the patterning to it or anything and I couldn't impose it, it resisted my imposition of pattern." The characteristics of this experience might be summarized as: 1) resistance of the stimuli to visual organization, 2) all stimuli appearing at equal intensity, 3) all stimuli actively calling for attention at once. Subject B's description suggests that the experience resulted from a de-automatization of the structures ordinarily providing visual organization of a landscape (30-500 feet). The ability to focus attention selectively and the normal figure-ground relationships were apparently de-automatized. It should be noted that subject B did not experience the room itself in this way.⁵²

I think that it is legitimate to suppose, as does Diekman, that if subject B had been a mystic longing to be touched by God, his vision of the transformed landscape might have seemed to him as an integral part of some sort of divine communion.

52 Ibid., p. 335.

Other subjects stressed the transfiguration, radiation or light phenomenon which we have already noted in our discussion of the characteristics of mystic experience.

Dr. Diekman does not suggest that any of the subjects in his experiment enjoyed a true mystical experience.

What I have described are analogs of mystic experiences, not true mystic experiences. These Ss did not have a sense of ineffable communication with the absolute, or profound illumination into the nature of Reality, nor of being in a state of Unity. However, their accounts do suggest that important basic elements of the mystic experience were achieved, and this in turn suggests that contemplative meditation as a psychological technique is a central element in the production of the trained mystic experience.⁵³

This experiment in contemplative meditation closely parallels that suggested by Evelyn Underhill and would seem to support her contention that steadfast contemplation of a particular object utilizes many of the natural faculties that are operative at higher levels of mystic experience.

As we saw in our chapter on unitive experience, the aim of the mystic is to achieve union with reality by moving beyond what is considered as the illusion of the sense world. We can go one step further now and say that it is not that the senses are unnecessary for achieving the transcendental sense or higher states of awareness, but that they must be cleansed or purified of the habits and patterns of perception

⁵³ Ibid., p. 338.

which distort contact with the world as it is.

The aim of contemplative meditation as a technique in the process of achieving such unity and communion then becomes clear:

The model-building process is specifically what is to be dismantled through the practice of meditation. In Zen, one is instructed to stop conceptualizing while remaining fully awake. In Yoga, the aim is to leave the "illusion"--to cease identifying the external world with our models.⁵⁴

The Zen koan is a good example of an Oriental approach to breaking the discursive-reason barrier and perceptual models which block many people from growth toward newer forms of consciousness.

In Zen a koan is a formulation, in baffling language, pointing to ultimate Truth. Koans cannot be solved by recourse to logical reasoning but only by awakening a deeper level of the mind beyond the discursive intellect.⁵⁵

Such more or less familiar koans as: What is the sound of one hand clapping? or What is your Face before your parents' birth? are examples of the somewhat torturous mind-jangling to which Zen disciples have been subjected.

When the logical, commonsense mind attempts to grapple with such verbal paradoxes it is frustrated at every turn of

⁵⁴ Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, Op. Cit., p. 194.

⁵⁵ Philip Kapleau, The Three Pillars of Zen, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967, p. 335-336.

the road. There simply are no answers to the question. The theory behind this exercise is that as the mind tires, gradually the disciple may become aware of other sources of knowledge that enable him to approach the question from an entirely different vantage point. In this sense the koan acts as a definite triggering mechanism to break a person out of a particular perceptual pattern.

As a technique of deautomatization, contemplative meditation utilizes many of the categories developed by Dr. Ludwig in order to achieve its goal of so transforming perceptual patterns that the vividness and de-differentiation often associated with unitive experience becomes possible. Some form of meditation has invariably been associated with the mystic quest. This is most probably because universal experience has shown that it can be an extremely effective technique for bringing on unusual states of consciousness that easily lend themselves to the overbelief interpretations of most religions. We have tried to expose and discuss some of the underlying mechanics of the deautomatized perception shifts associated with contemplative meditation in order to be able to contrast them with what takes place in the development of congruence with the experiencing process which will be discussed in the next chapter. At that time we will be in a better position to consider the conditions under which unitive consciousness contributes to fuller human functioning.

For the present, however, let us move on to consideration of a second technique practiced by those seriously seeking higher states of unitive consciousness. The question of renunciation touches on a deautomatizing technique that extends the momentary breakthroughs achieved in contemplative meditation throughout the whole of a person's existence by adopting a more generalized life-style which encourages continued and on-going deautomatization.

b) Renunciation

Under the general heading of renunciation we may include the twin activities of mortification and detachment which were briefly mentioned in Chapter II. As an essential part of the Purgative Way, they are both triggers to actual heightened states of awareness and unitive experience as well as constituting in themselves an all-inclusive life-style which can support those who travel the mystic way. Poverty, chastity, obedience, isolation, silence and various forms of physical and psychological asceticisms have always been traditional techniques prescribed for those who seriously strive to follow the mystic path. The fundamental explanation of the deautomatizing effect of such practices may be summarized as follows:

To the extent that perceptual and cognitive structures require the "nutriment" of their accustomed stimuli for adequate functioning, renunciation would be expected to weaken and even disrupt these structures, thus tending to produce an unusual experience.⁵⁶

Most forms of mortification and detachment fall under one or more of the five general categories of triggers developed by Dr. Arnold Ludwig for the production of altered states of consciousness. By somehow depriving an individual of his usual sensory input, or in any way tampering with it, a deautomatizing effect is more likely.

Evelyn Underhill presents a fairly aggressive explanation of the role of mortification and the deautomatization of perception and cognition, although she uses a much less developed psychology and the terminology associated with it.

In psychological language, the process of mortification is the process of setting up "new paths of neural discharge." That is to say, the mystic life has got to express itself in action: and for this new paths must be cut and new habits formed--all, in spite of the new self's enthusiasm, "against the grain"--resulting in a complete sublimation of personality. The energy which wells up incessantly in every living being must abandon the old road of least resistance and discharge itself in a new and more difficult way. In the terms of the hormic psychology, the conative drive of the psyche must be concentrated on new objectives; and the old paths, left to themselves, must fade and die. When they are dead, and the new life has triumphed, Mortification is at an end. The mystics always know when this moment comes. Often an inner voice then warns them to lay their active penances aside.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 331-332.

⁵⁷ Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 217.

As mortification and detachment become more and more successful, increasing flashes of unitive consciousness may appear sporadically as greater facility is acquired in the technique of breaking down the habitual perception patterns that have constituted ordinary awareness.

Such gleams of ecstatic vision, distributed through the later stages of purification, seem to be normal features of mystical development. Increasing control of the lower centres, of the surface intelligence and its scattered desires, permits the emergence of the transcendental perceptions.⁵⁸

These surprising moments of brilliant breakthrough to new levels of awareness are then almost immediately submerged again by the habitual state of consciousness. Their instability is so common a characteristic of the early stages of growth toward unitive awareness that it is not surprising that the mystics themselves should have evolved an explanation for such a phenomenon.

The mystics have a vivid metaphor by which to describe that alternation between the onset and the absence of the joyous transcendental consciousness which forms as it were the characteristic intermediate stage between the bitter struggles of pure Purgation, and the peace and radiance of the Illuminative Life. They call it Ludus Amoris, the "Game of Love" which God plays with the desirous soul [...] It is [...] a reflection in consciousness of that state of struggle, oscillation and unrest which precedes the first unification of the self. It ceases when this has taken place and the new level of reality has been attained.⁵⁹

58 Ibid., p. 226.

59 Ibid., p. 227-228.

Here we have a classic example of what William James and Marghanita Laski would describe as an overbelief interpretation applied to purely natural shifts in the perceptual field.

The final goal of mortification exhibits a very close resemblance to the development of the sense of self as organism-environment which we discussed in our treatment of field theory perception.

The death of selfhood in its narrow individualistic sense is, then, the primary object of mortification. All the twisted elements of character which foster the existence of this unreal yet complex creature are to be pruned away. Then, as with the trees of the forest, so with the spirit of man, strong new branches will spring into being, grow towards air and light. "I live, yet not I" is to be the declaration of the mystic who has endured this "bodily death." The self-that-is-to-be will live upon a plane where her own prejudices and preferences are so uninteresting as to be imperceptible. She must be weaned from these nursery toys: and weaning is a disagreeable process. The mystic, however, undertakes it as a rule without reluctance: pushed by his vivid consciousness of imperfection, his intuition of a more perfect state, necessary to the fulfillment of his love.⁶⁰

This process of weaning and, in a linguistic sense, making-dead of the so-called lower nature and its influence, must not lead one to suppose that this is the sole end of asceticism.

60 Ibid., p. 221.

... in spite of its etymological associations, the object of mortification is not death but life: the production of health and strength, the health and strength of the human consciousness viewed sub specie aeternitatis [...] No more than detachment, then, is mortification an end in itself. It is a process, an education directed towards the production of a definite kind of efficiency, the adjustment of human nature to the demands of its new life. Severe, and to the outsider apparently unmeaning--like their physical parallels the exercises of the gymnasium--its disciplines, faithfully accepted, do release the self from the pull of the lower nature, establish it on new levels of freedom and power.⁶¹

Along with the negative dimension of mortification, then, there is the much more important positive aspect that directs a death-dealing blow to the modes of perception and attachments which hold a person at the Sensory-Individual-Reality (S-IR) manner of being in the world.

By mortification [...] is to be understood the positive aspect of purification: the remaking in relation to reality of the permanent elements of character. These elements, so far, have subserved the interests of the old self, worked for it in the world of sense. Now they must be adjusted to the needs of the new self and to the transcendent world in which it moves. Their focal point is the old self; the "natural man" and his self-regarding instincts and desires. The object of mortification is to kill that old self, break up his egoistic attachments and cravings, in order that the higher centre, the "new man," may live and breathe.⁶²

Within Christian tradition the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience are central ingredients of the kind of detachment considered important for those who

61 Ibid., p. 217-218.

62 Ibid., p. 216-217.

wish to advance in religious life. There is a powerful force in the vows of religion which can move a person in the direction of that unitive perception which is the goal of mystic life.

Their common characteristic is this: they tend to make the subject regard itself, not as an isolated and interesting individual, possessing desires and rights, but as a scrap of the Cosmos, an ordinary bit of the Universal Life, only important as a part of the All, an expression of the Will Divine.⁶³

The purpose of the vows and other forms of renunciation is to broaden the base for the possibility of unitive consciousness by extending the deautomatizing process throughout the whole of life.

The de-automatization produced by contemplative meditation is enhanced and aided by the adoption of renunciation as a goal and a life style, a renunciation not confined to the brief meditative period alone. Poverty, chastity, isolation, and silence are traditional techniques prescribed for pursuing the mystic path: To experience God, keep your thoughts turned to God and away from the world and the body that binds one to the world. The meditative strategy is carried over into all segments of the subject's life. The mystic strives to banish from awareness the objects of the world and the desires directed toward them.⁶⁴

It should be unnecessary to illustrate how the three vows of religion can create a sense of detachment from material goods, the appetites of the body and the exercise of one's own will. Clearly, the evangelical counsels are meant

63 Ibid., p. 205.

64 Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 331.

to lead a person toward that state of detachment and indifference perhaps most characteristic of the fundamental virtue of poverty which

... consists in a breaking down of man's inveterate habit of trying to rest in, or take seriously, things which are less than God": i.e., which do not possess the character of reality.⁶⁵

It is an all-out attack on the illusion represented by a mode of perception which stops short with an individuality-first approach to the world.

It is not love but lust--the possessive case, the very food of selfhood--which poisons the relation between the self and the external world and "immediately fatigues" the soul. Divide the world into "mine" and "not mine," and unreal standards are set up, claims and cravings begin to fret the mind. We are the slaves of our own property.⁶⁶

The vow of poverty represents a frontal assault against the age-old tendency of man to identify himself with what he has rather than with who he is. It is often somewhat surprising to find that modern psychologists like Erich Fromm and others are much closer to the fundamental meaning of evangelical poverty than many so-called spiritual authors who sometimes wax eloquent on the subject. These psychologists have rooted the role of poverty in the sense of identity as something apart from the possession or non-possession of goods--a fact which classical ascetical authors recognized

65 Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 210.

66 Ibid., p. 206-207.

and referred to as poverty of spirit. They thus implicitly emphasize the kind of detachment necessary for a healthy sense of identity which paradoxically parallels almost exactly the orientation stressed by the evangelical counsel.

Many people easily confuse the identity of ego with the identity of "I" or self. The difference is fundamental and unmistakable. The experience of ego, and of ego-identity, is based on the concept of having. I have "me" as I have all other things which this "me" owns. Identity of "I" or self refers to the category of being and not of having. I am "I" only to the extent to which I am alive, interested, related, active, and to which I have achieved an integration between my appearance--to others and/or to myself--and the core of my personality. The identity crisis of our time is based essentially on the increasing alienation and reification of man, and it can be solved only to the extent to which man comes to life again, becomes active again. There are no psychological shortcuts to the solution to the identity crisis except the fundamental transformation of alienated man into living man.⁶⁷

When practiced in a healthy manner as a more or less generalized life-style, true poverty of spirit enables a person to break with and move beyond a sense of identity (and the perception patterns that accompany and reinforce it) that is built almost exclusively on a subject-object, individuality first relatedness second, S-IR instead of C-IR, classical physics as opposed to field theory mode of self experience.

We must recognize, however, that the mere practice of poverty or any other techniques of deautomatization do not necessarily insure that those who engage in such activity

67 Erich Fromm, The Revolution of Hope, Bantam, New York, Harper & Row, 1968, p. 87.

become more fully functioning human beings as a result of their endeavors. Religion is a dangerous thing, and equally a refuge for sinners and neurotics.

To say that some have [...] taken refuge in mere abnegation is but to say that asceticism is a human, not a superhuman art, and is subject to "the frailty of the creature." But on the whole, [...] excesses are mainly found amongst saintly types who have not exhibited true mystic intuition. This intuition, entailing as it does communion with intensest Life, gives to its possessors a sweet sanity, a delicate balance, which guards them, as a rule, from such conceptions of chastity as that of the youthful saint who shut himself in a cupboard for fear he should see his mother pass by: from the obedience which identifies the voice of the director with the voice of God; from detachment such as that exhibited by the Blessed Angela of Foligno, who, though a true mystic, viewed with almost murderous satisfaction the deaths of relatives who were "impediments."⁶⁸

One final comment should be added regarding the building of intrapsychic barriers against distracting stimuli which has been noted in connection with the practice of contemplative meditation and renunciation. Not only can there be an isolation from external nutritive stimuli, but a process of inner isolation from distracting stimuli may be developed as

⁶⁸ Evelyn Underhill, Op. Cit., p. 216. The reference to Blessed Angela of Foligno is to the following statement: "In that time and by God's will there died my mother, who was a great hindrance unto me in following the way of God: soon after my husband died likewise, and also all my children. And because I had commenced to follow the aforesaid Way, and had prayed God that He would rid me of them, I had great consolation of their deaths." (Ste. Angèle de Foligno, Le Livre de l'Expérience des Vrais Fidèles, Ed. and Trad. par M. J. Ferré, Paris, 1927, p. 10.)

well. This means that more practiced individuals can put themselves into a state of comparative isolation even in a relatively distracting external environment--thereby aiding the process of deautomatization.

The subjects of the meditation experiment quoted earlier reported that a decrease in responsiveness to distracting stimuli took place as they became more practiced. They became more effective, with less effort, in barring unwanted stimuli from awareness. These reports suggest that psychological barrier structures were established as the subjects became more adept. EEG studies of Zen monks yielded similar results. The effect of a distracting stimulus, as measured by the disappearance of alpha rhythm, was most prominent in the novices, less prominent in those of intermediate training, and almost absent in the master. It may be that the intensive, long-term practice of meditation creates temporary stimulus barriers producing a functional state of sensory isolation. On the basis of sensory isolation experiments it would be expected that long-term deprivation (or decreased variability) of a particular class of stimulus "nutriment" would cause an alteration in those functions previously established to deal with that class of stimuli. These alterations seem to be a type of de-automatization [...] Thus, renunciation alone can be viewed as producing de-automatization. When combined with contemplative meditation, it produces a very powerful effect.⁶⁹

A surprising confirmation of the effect such stimulus barriers can have has come from a recent research endeavor that has sought to study the voluntary alteration of physiological processes. It is a well known fact that the Yoga masters are able, with long years of practice, to voluntarily

69 Arthur J. Diekman, "De-Automatization and the Mystic Experience", p. 332.

bring about remarkable changes in their body chemistry, heart rate, body temperature, blood flow, etc. Various forms of meditation serve as a prelude and definite support for this kind of activity which involves an obvious deautomatization of the more or less ordinary relationship between volitional activity and the functioning of the autonomic nervous system.

Neal Miller and Leo Dicara of Rockefeller University have conducted a sophisticated and theoretically relevant research investigation of voluntary alteration of physiological processes.⁷⁰ Their study was designed to investigate the possibility that "... learning may take place in the autonomic nervous system without any involvement of the skeletal musculature".⁷¹ Using experimental animals and implanting electrodes within various sites in the body, they were able to monitor the particular process (for example, blood flow) within a specified location. The pre-selected degree of activity in the particular organ or site in question was then converted into electrical stimulation of certain reward areas of the brain. In order to increase the rate of electrical

70 Neal Miller, "Learning of Visceral and Glandular Responses", in Science, Vol. 163, 1969, p. 434-445; Leo Dicara, "Learning in the Autonomic Nervous System", in Scientific American, January 1970, p. 30-39.

71 Claudio Naranjo and Robert E. Ornstein, Op. Cit., p. 219.

brain stimulation the animals had to alter some aspect or other of their autonomic activity. Miller and DiCara found that

With sensors implanted in specific sites to pick up the signal and information given to the brain in terms of direct brain reward, the animals could learn very easily to alter their blood flow, blood pressure, stomach blood flow, kidney functioning, and the electrical activity of their brain.⁷²

In one instance a rat even learned to control its blood flow to each ear differentially, raising it in one and then in the other.

In order to eliminate the possibility of the involvement of skeletal muscles in this autonomic learning process, the animals were injected with curare which selectively paralyzes the musculature and allows no central nervous system commands to reach the muscles. The injection of this drug

... relates directly to the aspect of meditation as a process of turning off competing activity [...]. When Miller first administered curare to his animals he feared it might slow down their rate of learning to control physiological processes. The reverse turned out to be true. The animals that were paralyzed by curare could learn much more quickly to alter their heart rate, blood flow, kidney functions, etc. Recall that curare is a drug that halts all ordinary movements and the proprioceptive impulses that would normally enter awareness. It may be, then, that curare in these experimental animals performed a function similar to that of meditation in people. Both are means of reducing irrelevant activity, and both may make the detection of faint signals much more easy. (Emphasis ours)⁷³

72 Ibid., p. 220.

73 Loc. Cit.

The process of deautomatization may be directly aided by such activity insofar as serious effort at contemplative meditation insures that a higher degree of faint signals may be readily available to be detected as other, more habitual patterns of perception break down.

So much, then, for our remarks on renunciation and the role it plays by effectively encouraging the process of deautomatization in those who seek higher levels of unitive consciousness. Now, before summing up and making a concluding statement, let us briefly consider one research project dealing with drug usage and religious consciousness in order to better appreciate why the deautomatizing effect of chemical ecstasy has been a perennial path travelled by those in search of unitive experience.

c) Chemical Ecstasy

One important aspect of serious psychedelic research has been the effort to investigate connections which may exist between mystic awareness and what Dr. Jean Houston has referred to as the psycho-chemistry of religious consciousness. We might phrase a question in the light of our earlier consideration of field theory perception and ask whether as one moves along the continuum from common sense toward greater field theory modes of consciousness, do measurable changes in body and psycho-chemistry naturally occur? If there is a

natural shift in the body-chemistry as altered ways of perceiving emerge in a person, then psychedelic research may eventually become an invaluable tool in the investigation of such transformations in consciousness.

It may very well be that the process of deautomatization is associated with subtle chemical transformations which the present level of instrumentation is not sufficiently refined to detect. We would also hasten to add, however, that the relationship between changes in body-chemistry and the process of fuller human functioning yet remain to be determined.

In a fascinating project carried on at the Foundation for Mind Research in New York city, Dr. Houston worked with over one hundred subjects in her study of the chemical triggering of religious consciousness.⁷⁴ During the course of her attempt to take depth soundings of the psyche throughout the research project she discovered an interesting pattern

74 Jean Houston, "Psycho-Chemistry and the Religious Consciousness", in International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. 5, No. 3, Sept. 1965, p. 397-413. A more extensive work is, of course, R. E. L. Masters and Jean Houston, The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience, Delta, New York, Dell Publishing Co., 1966. Cf. especially chapter 9: Religious and Mystical Experience. An interesting article on "Mysticism in the Laboratory" also appeared in the religion section of Time Magazine for Oct. 5, 1970. The article details the research of the Foundation for Mind Research and some of the non-drug stimuli used to induce altered states of consciousness in which religious and other psychical experiences are possible.

of phenomenological descent occurring in her subjects. The pattern consisted of four distinct levels which she termed the sensory, the psychological or ontogenetic, the phylogenetic, and the mysterium.

We are all familiar with popularized accounts of the somewhat fantastic and often bizarre sensory changes which frequently occur when people get high on LSD or some other psychedelic agent. It is at this level that rudimentary sensory automatizations are seemingly broken, little noticed aspects of perception are reinvested with attention, and the dulled or jaded character of sensory experience is at least momentarily washed away in the richness of color, sound and other sensory experiences.

The extent of (the) loss of vividness and detail resulting from automatization can be appreciated when one undergoes an experience of de-automatization through such techniques as meditation, use of LSD-25, sensory isolation or spontaneous mystic experience: colors may appear to have gained (temporarily) a new richness and vividness so that the natural world is seen in a "fresh" state.⁷⁵

Dr. Houston found that most people tended to stop at this first sensory level or the next--the psychological or ontogenetic where contents of the personal unconscious became accessible.

⁷⁵ Arthur J. Diekman, "Implications of Experimentally Induced Contemplative Meditation", p. 113.

A majority of subjects will tend to focus their psychedelic experience on the levels of sensory and ontogenetic exploration. In our experience, however, fully 40% will descend into a deeper layer and become involved in an exploration of transpersonal and phylogenetic material. When the threshold of consciousness is crossed they appear to be flooded with a kaleidoscopic vision of cultures, peoples, symbols, remnants of historical and protohistorical material, myths, rituals, and archetypal personae.⁷⁶

At the phylogenetic level there seem to appear "certain collective or transpersonal structural elements of the human psyche" which "like the morphological elements in the human body, are inherited".⁷⁷ Whether such phenomena constitute some form of validation of Jungian archetypes and a collective unconscious remains for future investigation to determine. It is noteworthy, however, that symbols become extremely important at this stage.

In several cases symbols hitherto unrealized in the life of the subject have emerged spontaneously out of the unconscious, pregnant with meaning and providing the subject with a living reality and directional frame of reference previously unknown. These "spontaneous" symbols provide psychic energy for new attitudes and more developed states of consciousness.⁷⁸

Investigation of any connection between symbols and the process of deautomatization gives much promise for future research. There may be an important key here to a more

76 Jean Houston, "Psycho-Chemistry and the Religious Consciousness", p. 402.

77 Ibid., p. 404.

78 Ibid., p. 408.

developed understanding of the unusual shifts in perception associated with the production of unitive consciousness.

Dr. Houston's primary interest was in the final level, the mysterium, which she says was actually reached by only a small percentage of her subjects. She discounted as belonging to this level those instances in which enhanced sensory perception was interpreted by the subject as having religious significance. Her research showed a definite distinction between the fourth level, which in most instances was attained only after having passed through a phylogenetic stage, and more superficial religious awareness which occurred at other levels.

Dr. Houston first noted that there was already a certain predisposition to descend to this level of mystical apprehension on the part of those few subjects who actually did so. During the course of their life they had demonstrated concern over questions of a religious nature. As their experience at the fourth level unfolded a remarkable similarity appeared in the structure and development of what happened. Dr. Houston summarized the various elements as follows:

In almost every case the experience is initiated with a sense of the ego dissolving into boundless being. This process is almost always attended by an experience of the subject being caught up in a cascading preternatural light [...] Another aspect of the experience is in the subject becoming aware of himself as continuous with the energy of the universe. It is frequently described with words to the effect that the subject was part of a dynamic continuum. It is also experienced as a state in which the subject professes to being filled by divinity [...] It is characteristic of the subject at this time to feel that the categories of time are strained by the tensions of eternity [...] The subject will experience the world as transfigured and unified. He will report himself to be caught up in an undifferentiated unity wherein the knower, the knowledge, and the known are experienced as a single reality.⁷⁹

This description appears to correspond quite closely with much of the early research on mysticism conducted by William James in The Varieties of Religious Experience. Similar parallels are also easily found in Evelyn Underhill's classic work on Mysticism.

It is, of course, premature to argue that drug-induced and non-drug-induced mystical experiences are the same. Indeed, there is some evidence to suggest they are not. However, Dr. Houston's conclusion to her study does merit further investigation.

79 Ibid., p. 411-412.

So striking is the correspondence between these subjects in the similar unfolding and structural patterning of their experiences that one is moved to consider the possibility of a phenomenology of the religious consciousness (at least, of that consciousness evoked in the psychedelic state). All seem to descend to an autonomous region of the psyche wherein resides the shadow of ontological constructs heretofore suggested by Jungian and depth psychologists. At the depths of the phenomenological descent resides the mystical and philosophical apprehension of Being, the subject experiencing Being as the ground and origin of all its configurations, with the difference, however, that in the psychedelic-mystic state he is freed from the interpretive prism of perception and reflection and claims a direct knowledge of Being --an experience of unfiltered primordial energy unknown to the professional ontologist.⁸⁰

Serious research into the chemical basis for unitive experience is only in its infancy at this time, and, in one sense, even to present some of the preliminary data is somewhat premature. However, given the popular interest in drug usage and its connection with ecstatic religious experience, it is important for the sake of completeness that a beginning be made in the scholarly investigation of this material. This does not mean being uncritical in our evaluation of what limited data is available. Indeed, when the dynamics of fuller human functioning are more clearly explained there seems to be some solid evidence to sustain a preliminary position of caution and extreme reserve regarding the use of psychedelics as an approach to unitive consciousness that

80 Ibid., p. 412.

supports human growth. The deautomatizing influence is unquestionably there. But whether or not the quality of consciousness produced implies any advance in personal integration and greater congruence with the experiencing process is another question.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter has been to make a preliminary response to the first question asked at the beginning of this research presentation:

- (1) Can Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology contribute any hypotheses to explain some of the psychological dynamics that underly the shift in perception and developing sense of self ordinarily associated with the unitive experience that characterize more advanced states of primary religious consciousness?

The development of material on deautomatization of perception and the various ways of producing ASCs moved us into a discussion of some of the actual dynamics and mechanics of perception shift which are often involved in the use of more traditional religious triggers (like meditation, asceticism, and drugs) to achieve unitive experience.

The deliberate manipulation of consciousness as a means to develop ASCs depends to a large extent upon an understanding of awareness as a construction and not a registration of external reality within the organism. The function of various techniques described in the preceding pages is to

dismantle the model-building process by breaking through the inhibiting automatizations which bind us to a repetitious and stale manner of experiencing.

We must now push our understanding of construction and registration a bit further, seeking to discern the conditions under which the person seems more capable of genuine openness to himself and the world around him. In other words, are there times when there seems to be less of a need to construct, when the person can truly be without the need to constantly select, categorize, defend himself, etc.? We must seek to understand what takes place when a person develops sufficient congruence that he can truly allow another and the world around him to simply be without the need to always re-arrange and construct it according to his own self-image.

We will now try to show that there is an expression of unitive consciousness which naturally flows out of the very experiencing process when a person is genuinely open to and accepting himself. People truly in touch with themselves are thereby in touch with the unity of all of reality. But this is an expression of unitive consciousness that flows out of the fully functioning person and out of the forward movement of the experiencing process. It is not merely the product of a somewhat superficial manipulation of attention which can produce unusual sensory phenomena that simply mimic

the more productive states.

The present chapter has provided us with one way of looking at the generation of unitive consciousness. Let us now consider another approach--one which lends itself to determining when the unitive dimension of primary religious experience supports an individual in the process of becoming a more fully functioning person.

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TOWARD A HUMANISTIC-TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

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CHAPTER IV

UNITIVE CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE FULLY FUNCTIONING PERSON--A STUDY OF CONGRUENCE WITH THE EXPERIENCING PROCESS

In a recently collected series of articles appearing in New Directions in Client-Centered Therapy,¹ Joseph T. Hart, the editor, discussed a question titled "Beyond Psychotherapy--The Applied Psychology of the Future". The main point of this particular article was that in the years ahead, "an adequate applied psychology must speak to the very practical problems of ethics and religious experience".² Hart envisaged as one part of this new psychology, an area which he names "Experimental Mysticism--Psychology as the Science of Soul".

By "soul" I do not mean an insubstantial entity or essence that persists after death--such a definition can have little meaning for the scientist or practicing therapist. I am talking about a level of awareness, existence, or being, a psychological phenomenon. Psychology as the science of soul attempts to understand the characteristics, contents, and processes that describe this level of awareness. Pragmatic mysticism, or the practical psychology of the soul, attempts to develop and systematize techniques that will permit man to achieve this level of awareness.³

1 Joseph T. Hart and T. M. Tomlinson, Eds., New Directions in Client-Centered Therapy, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

2 Joseph T. Hart, "Beyond Psychotherapy--The Applied Psychology of the Future", in New Directions in Client-Centered Therapy, p. 565.

3 Ibid., p. 579.

Having made his point that in experimental mysticism a transformation of awareness is sought--a conclusion with which James, Underhill, LeShan, Diekman, Naranjo, Stace and all the other quoted commentators on mystical experience would agree--Hart then made the following statement regarding the orientation of Dr. Rogers and other Humanists as grounds for just such a practical psychology of religious experience:

It seems to me there are two sources in client-centered psychotherapy that lead directly to experimental mysticism as a necessary development within practical psychology. One source is in the theory of experiencing. This theory [...] posits the locus of man's existence within the flow of his own meaningful experience. The man who cannot live in this flow lives at a lower level of consciousness, deprived of his potentiality, of his legitimate birthright. Clearly, this secular theoretical position is compatible, if not identical, with the religious attitudes of mysticism. The way of realization is within.

And what of the man who has found the way within? This is the second connection between client-centered therapy and experimental mysticism. The client-centered ideal of the person who is able to claim his birthright and live within the fulfilling being of his own experience reveals a man who discovers universals. When Rogers writes about "the possibility of universal human value directions emerging from the experiencing of the human organism," he expresses in modern language the age-old mystic claim that values are discovered within man, not imposed from without. But this happens only if a person can open himself to the direct experience of those values. To do this he must have the courage to discover himself. He must learn to be free: "This process of the good life is not, I am convinced, a life for the faint-hearted. It involves the stretching and growing of becoming more and more of one's potentialities. It involves the courage to be. It means launching oneself fully into the stream of life. Yet the deeply exciting thing

about human beings is that when the individual is inwardly free, he chooses as the good life this process of becoming."⁴

In a very real sense the two sources identified in this quotation pinpoint the interests and principal goals of the present research project--even though in his article Hart does not develop the implications of what he says in this brief summary. The man who cannot live "within the flow of his own meaningful experience" and chooses instead to substitute an automatized world of defensively patterned response which ultimately alienates him from his own genuine feelings, is a man who "lives at a lower level of consciousness".

The man who "finds the way within", can tap into the profound process of feeling and experiencing that is uniquely his own. He is not held at the level of superficial automatizations and patterned behavior in his response to external reality but discovers in each moment a freshness and originality quite unlike that of anyone else. This "unpatterned" experiencing comes to have a value for such a person because in each instance the response which he gives is a congruent and genuine expression of who he is at that particular moment.

⁴ Ibid., p. 566. The reference to Rogers' statement on values in from: C. R. Rogers, "Toward a modern approach to Values: The valuing process in the mature person", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 68, No. 2, 1964, p. 160-167. The quotation on the good life is from: C. R. Rogers, "A Therapist's View of the Good Life", in The Humanist, Vol. 17, 1957, p. 291-300.

The possibility of unitive consciousness is available within the organism because such a person is truly congruent with the deeper feelings and sensitivities that are operative within any given relationship. The channels for an organism-environment experience are open because the grid of intervening automatizations and categories and patterned perceptions which block in-depth organismic availability are simply not present.

To be congruent with the more profound movement of the experiencing process is to be in touch with the very source of organismic awareness and valuing which grounds unitive consciousness. It is in this type of experience that we discover "the possibility of universal human value directions emerging from the experiencing of the human organism". There is no need to go outside one's own process of experiencing to find values. Rather, the task is to discover the true inner path. But finding the way within is not easy. It is, in fact, the central issue of this dissertation.

As we have already seen, a simple deautomatization of perception as an explanation of one way to union operates on the principle that when specified techniques are used, programmed responses and categories are at least momentarily broken. This allows what is interpreted as the freshness of unitive perception to surge to the surface of consciousness. However up to this point in our discussion there has been no

mention made of a deeper movement of feeling within the organism which ultimately may hold the key to unlocking altered states of consciousness associated with unitive experience and fuller human functioning. In the previous chapter all our talk was of the mechanics of perception shift associated with what was interpreted as a breaking down of automatization. Now, however, we must attempt to penetrate deeper into the person to examine whether the origins of unitive consciousness may lie at another level within the organism.

It is the theory of experiencing, therefore, with its roots deep within the Rogerian understanding of congruence which will occupy our attention in this chapter. I will attempt to show that the well researched findings of Dr. Rogers and his colleagues, especially Dr. Gendlin, provide a substantial basis for appreciating not only some of the more profound "organismic" foundations for unitive consciousness, but also of determining a number of the conditions under which these heightened experiences actually contribute to fuller human functioning.

In beginning to discuss this material, we are initiating our development of the second specific goal of the research project outlined at the end of Chapter one. These goals were initially summarized in the following two generalized statements:

- (1) Many unitive perceptions occasioned by contemplative meditation, renunciation and drug usage mimic the perceptual shifts associated with the process of constructive personality change but without this change necessarily occurring. We may speak of this as a simple deautomatization of perception.
- (2) The experience of congruence with the experiencing process, as developed by Carl Rogers and Eugene Gendlin, brings its own perceptual shifts and experience of unification as an individual proceeds along the path of becoming a more fully functioning person. However, these shifts in perception flow out of more profound transformations in the personality and sense of self. They are not merely deautomatizations of perception occasioned by forms of contemplative meditation, renunciation or drug usage that can shake perceptual constancies without necessarily contributing to fuller human functioning.

We will begin our presentation by reflecting briefly on Carl Rogers' statement regarding the possibility of universal human value directions emerging from the experiencing of the human organism. There is an implicit philosophy of man and understanding of human nature contained in these words which tones the work of Dr. Rogers and many of the Humanistic psychologists associated with him. I present this material early in the chapter because of its implications for identifying the sources of unitive awareness within the human organism.

This initial section will be followed by a discussion of congruence as developed by Carl Rogers and the nature of the experiencing process as developed by Eugene Gendlin. The final pages will draw this material together and critically compare it with the process of deautomatization. Let us

turn, then, to our first consideration:

Humanistic Reflections on the Nature of
Man--A Prenote on Development of Values

In a discussion of congruence and optimal adjustment, Dr. Eugene Gendlin notes that:

... The Rogerian definition of adjustment is complete openness to experience (that is, complete congruence between experience and awareness). Adjustment is thus defined, not socially or culturally, but in the terms of the individual. Furthermore, the optimally adjusted individual includes no internal surrogate of social values (no superego). Introjected social values are considered to cause maladjustment because they distort the individual's openness to the meanings of his own experience to him. The optimal individual, because he allows his own meanings as he finds them in his own experience, does not need socially imposed values. (Emphasis ours)

This view is in sharp contrast to many views in which socially given values are basic to adjustment and form a basic part of an individual. Social controls, socially handed down meanings are seen to be vital to individual meaning and adjustment by most views in psychology (Freudian superego, for example) and social psychology (G. H. Mead, for example).⁵

With the rejection of introjected values as constitutive of mature growth firmly stated, Gendlin then goes on to deal with the obvious objection raised against such a position.

⁵ Eugene T. Gendlin, Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning, New York, MacMillan (Free Press), 1962, p. 254.

Other viewpoints emphasize the role of socially created and socially controlled meanings. Seen from these viewpoints, the Rogerian view is a naive omission of the recent discoveries of social psychology and a dangerous, antisocial, anti-intellectual doctrine. It appears to omit the need for control of impulses and for consideration of the needs and feelings of others.

It is clear from the foregoing that a precise statement of the subjective process of implicit inclusion of meanings is needed. Rogers must assume that "feeling" implicitly contains social and moral meanings and values. (Emphasis ours) Without a theoretical statement of implicitly meaningful experiencing, "following one's feeling" can be misunderstood as impulse-ridden and selfish.⁶

Perhaps it is this central point, namely, the discovery that the core of personality is positive and that the constructive social and moral meanings and values are rooted within this central core (and need not be introjected from the outside), that both distinguishes the approach of the Humanists and Transpersonalists from other orientations in psychotherapy, as well as indicating a unique way of determining when the unitive perceptions associated with religious consciousness contribute to fuller human functioning. Let us explore the implications of such a possibility a bit further since it has obvious relevance for development of a more broadly based psychology of religion.

Carl Rogers summarizes his own position in this matter as follows:

⁶ Ibid., p. 254-255.

One of the most revolutionary concepts to grow out of our clinical experience is the growing recognition that the innermost core of man's nature, the deepest layers of his personality, the base of his "animal nature," is positive in nature--is basically socialized, forward-moving, rational and realistic.⁷

Dr. Rogers then describes the various reasons why such a position is so revolutionary and hard to accept.

This point of view is so foreign to our present culture that I do not expect it to be accepted, and it is indeed so revolutionary in its implications that it should not be accepted without thorough-going inquiry. But even if it should stand these tests, it will be difficult to accept. Religion, especially the Protestant Christian tradition, has permeated our culture with the concept that man is basically sinful, and only by something approaching a miracle can his sinful nature be negated. In psychology, Freud and his followers have presented convincing arguments that the id, man's basic and unconscious nature, is primarily made up of instincts which would, if permitted expression, result in incest, murder, and other crimes. The whole problem of therapy, as seen by this group, is how to hold these untamed forces in check in a wholesome and constructive manner, rather than in the costly fashion of the neurotic. But the fact that at heart man is irrational, unsocialized, destructive of others and self--this is a concept accepted almost without question.⁸

To be sure, Rogers admits that there have been occasional voices raised in protest against such a position--Abraham Maslow being a significant example of such reaction. But the prevalent conviction of man's inner corruptness, the heritage of original sin in the Christian tradition, is

⁷ Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1961, p. 90-91.

⁸ Ibid., p. 91.

usually so strong that voices raised in protest against such a conceptualization of human nature have been largely crying in the wilderness.⁹

It should be clear, then, why social control and introjected social and moral values are considered so important when placed within the scheme of an anthropology that lays such stress on inner corruption (or, in a more mitigated way, at least on the tendency to slide in that direction). The need for control is paramount when such untamed forces lie within man.

Carl Rogers, however, arrives at a much different conclusion.

As I look back over my years of clinical experience and research, it seems to me that I have been very slow to recognize the falseness of this popular and professional concept. The reason, I believe, lies in the fact that in therapy there are continually being uncovered hostile and anti-social feelings, so that it is easy to assume that this indicates the deeper and therefore the basic nature of man. Only slowly has it become evident that these untamed and unsocial feelings are neither the deepest nor the strongest, and that the inner core of man's personality is the organism itself, which is essentially both self-preserving and social.¹⁰

9 For a contemporary effort to integrate some of the values of Humanistic Psychology with traditional Christian theology--especially in the area of the nature of man and the problem of original sin--cf. Edwin M. McMahon and Peter A. Campbell, Becoming a Person in the Whole Christ, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1967, p. 134ff, and Edwin M. McMahon and Peter A. Campbell, The In-Between: Evolution in Christian Faith, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1969, p. 94ff.

10 Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, p. 91-92.

Here Rogers puts his finger on one reason why some conceptualizations of psychotherapy tend to reenforce the prevailing theological position of man's inherent evilness or at least his tendency, when not controlled, to act out selfish and anti-social behavior patterns. With so much hostile feeling often arising in therapy, the impression can easily be gained that the inner core of man is largely bent on destruction and therefore that strict control is necessary to hold these negative forces in check.

Rogers, however, with greater perceptiveness, focuses attention on the underlying motives of a client's behavior and finds that beneath the bitterness, hatred and desire to get back at a world which has perhaps cheated him, is a much less anti-social feeling, a profound experience of having been hurt. And, if through care and attention one can penetrate beyond the pain, a further rewarding discovery is made.

Underneath the layer of controlled surface behavior, underneath the bitterness, underneath the hurt, is a self that is positive, and that is without hate. This I believe is the lesson which our clients have been facing us with for a long time, and which we have been slow to learn [...] Do we dare to generalize from this type of experience that if we cut through deeply enough to our organismic nature, that we find that man is a positive and social animal? This is the suggestion from our clinical experience.¹¹

¹¹ Ibid., p. 101 and 103.

So often the bitterness, the hatred and frustration that come in life (especially when directed against ourselves) arises because we have not lived our own life but have in various ways allowed others to assume that responsibility for us. We live their values, their morals, their religious traditions. We do not so much choose from out of our own experiencing process--rather, we take on (introject) the norms, mannerisms and valuing processes of those whose opinion is important for us.

In this connection I have been astonished to find how accurately the Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard, pictured the dilemma of the individual more than a century ago, with deep psychological insight. He points out that the most common despair is to be in despair at not choosing, or willing, to be oneself; but that the deepest form of despair is to choose "to be another than himself." On the other hand "to will to be that self which one truly is, is indeed the opposite of despair," and this choice is the deepest responsibility of man. As I read some of his writings I almost feel that he must have listened in on the statements made by our clients as they search and explore for the reality of self--often a painful and troubling search.¹²

If it is truly the age-old mystic claim that values are discovered within man and not imposed from without, then, as Evelyn Underhill and others have pointed out, growth in unitive consciousness is more of a process of unfolding or liberation, a development of what in a sense is potentially already there. In Rogerian terms, what must be freed or

¹² Ibid., p. 110.

liberated is the very inner dynamism which when operating in an unobstructed fashion naturally moves in the direction of maturity in the human organism and the modes of consciousness associated with such maturity.

Gradually my experience has forced me to conclude that the individual has within himself the capacity and the tendency, latent if not evident, to move forward toward maturity. In a suitable psychological climate this tendency is released, and becomes actual rather than potential [...] It shows itself in the tendency to reorganize his personality and his relationship to life in ways which are regarded as more mature. Whether one calls it a growth tendency, a drive toward self-actualization, or a forward-moving directional tendency, it is the mainspring of life, and is, in the last analysis, the tendency upon which all psychotherapy depends. It is the urge which is evident in all organic and human life--to expand, extend, become autonomous, develop, mature--the tendency to express and activate all the capacities of the organism, to the extent that such activation enhances the organism or the self. This tendency may become deeply buried under layer after layer of encrusted psychological defenses; it may be hidden behind elaborate facades which deny its existence; but it is my belief that it exists in every individual, and awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed.¹³

It is his basic trust in the positive tendency of the organism, an approach to growth through congruence with the experiencing process, that supports Dr. Rogers' position on human growth. The basic human values are already within the organism. They need not be introjected from the outside. Indeed, such introjected values, when lived as alien objects that have not grown out of the process of one's own experiencing lead, as Gendlin notes, to "maladjustment because

¹³ Ibid., p. 35.

they distort the individual's openness to the meanings of his own experience to him." It is choosing "to be another than oneself" which Kierkegaard identified with the ultimate despair.

On the other hand, the person who is truly growing in congruence and the forward movement of his own experiencing process develops more of what Rogers has called "an internal locus of evaluation"--the exact opposite of an uncritical introjection of another's values, no matter how praiseworthy and socially or morally correct they may be in themselves.

Another trend which is evident in this process of becoming a person relates to the source or locus of choices and decisions, or evaluative judgments. The individual increasingly comes to feel that this locus of evaluation lies within himself. Less and less does he look to others for approval or disapproval; for standards to live by; for decisions and choices. He recognizes that it rests within himself to choose; that the only question which matters is, "Am I living in a way which is deeply satisfying to me, and which truly expresses me?" This I think is perhaps the most important question for the creative individual.¹⁴

With the locus of choice, decision, and evaluative judgment situated within the organism, Eugene Gendlin then develops this material in a way which, if creatively expanded, can provide us with a significant point of departure for locating the sources of unitive consciousness in a similar

14 Ibid., p. 119.

fashion and then evaluating whether congruence or simple de-automatization generates a form of unitive experience that significantly contributes to fuller human functioning.

If precise theoretical terms can refer to experiencing (felt meaning) as aware and implicitly containing meaning, then Rogers' idea of adjustment can be stated. The "feeling" one optimally "follows" is in awareness and implicitly contains social, moral, and intellectual meanings. The individual does include the socially given meanings, yet Rogers' distinction between one's "own experience" and "introjected values" is maintained. There is a vital difference between meanings found in one's own experience (implicit in one's own feeling) that are perhaps due to society and, on the other hand, introjected concepts, conclusions, judgments also due to society that an individual has instead of, not implicitly in, his experiencing. Successful clients in client-centered therapy most often conclude therapy with attitudes that include more of the values of society than did their attitudes at the start. They also tend to accept the needs of others to a greater extent. But these social and moral attitudes are now not mere judgments that an individual feels forced to believe or obey. They have arisen from an individual's examination of the implicit meanings in his own experiencing, that is, his own feelings. To arrive at the point where an individual considers his own feelings as even worthy of such a serious examination, he usually first overthrows a great number of introjected values and judgments that prevent him from looking directly at his experiencing. When he does look directly at it, he discovers a great many attitudes and feelings that do--and a great many that do not--conform to the social values. He integrates these feelings and attitudes so as to take maximal account of all of them. Thus, he is no standard copy of the social values when he finishes. Nor is he oblivious to or in conflict with them.¹⁵

¹⁵ Eugene T. Gendlin, Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning, p. 255-257.

The distinction which Dr. Gendlin makes is between meanings and values growing out of what we will soon refer to as a forward moving process of experiencing and those which are taken on in such a way that they support what we will term a structure-bound manner of experiencing--a highly automatized, rigidly patterned response. In the latter instance an individual does not even advert to his own feeling process. Rather, he simply lives the programmed values which the authority figures or important people in his life have determined are to be his.

Let me now briefly attempt to draw out some of the implications of these initial reflections on values for the development of unitive consciousness as a valued aspect of growth in the capacity for primary religious experience.

What often appears as a type of unitive perception can, in a sense, be forced on the organism by deliberately doing violence to established automatizations and perception patterns. As we shall soon see, this is quite different from a unity experience that can flow naturally from positive forward movement toward maturity. When a value is placed on the exercise and enjoyment of unitive consciousness, then a person is faced with the question of how to cultivate and develop such heightened awareness--the way within. It is at this point that an individual has the option to proceed in one of two ways. He can try to force the perception on

himself by focusing attention on many of the deautomatizing techniques (asceticism, contemplative meditation, drugs) which break down inhibiting patterns. However, just because what appear as momentary breakthroughs may occasionally occur does not mean that deep down the organism is ready for some form of unitive consciousness as a more or less steady mode of existence.

What is often interpreted as unitive consciousness can be forced on the organism in much the same manner that introjected social values can be taken in--but in each instance, neither represents the real process of experiencing of the person himself. Rather, what is introjected or forced on the organism is present as a kind of alien object. Furthermore, if an individual becomes habituated to discovering his values or unitive consciousness through introjection or looking outside of himself (in this instance to a specific technique for deautomatization), then such a person becomes less and less open to the meaning of his own experience. He identifies the way within with use of a technique that ultimately, as we shall see, can further alienate him from constructive contact with his own experiencing process.

However, there is a second option available for those in quest of heightened modes of unitive awareness. It is to get close to the deeper levels of one's organismic nature and to the positive capacities, tendencies, values and types of

awareness that are present there. As our discussion develops, it will become clear that an integral part of the positive striving of the person for growth, fuller human functioning and what we will eventually define as constructive personality change, involves the emergence of unitive forms of consciousness as a distinct value originating within the organism itself. Our point, however, will be to show that the eventual appearance of such heightened awareness directly depends upon development of congruence with the experiencing process as a kind of organismic foundation and pre-requisite for sustaining this more mature type of human consciousness, rather than a simple deautomatization of perception which can actually block the development of organismically grounded unitive consciousness.

When a person matures to the point where the locus of values is situated within himself and the positive forward movement of his own experiencing process, there is then no need to look outside for direction or so-called deautomatizing triggers. This does not mean that the person is isolated and sufficient unto himself in a kind of solipsistic autonomy. Such a maturing person always experiences himself-in-relation-ship. He always senses himself as an organism-environment and as such is quite conscious of his tied-in-ness and dependence.

As a momentary aside, it is interesting to note that Carl Rogers' location of the source of social values within the individual and his rejection of introjected values as being the principal way to adjustment is paradoxically a direct confirmation of the Christian philosophical position on the social nature of man. I say paradoxically because it would at first seem to be the exact opposite. However, if man is by nature social, then it follows that the social values (and the essentially unitive consciousness which supports them) must somehow be found within every member of the species who possesses this nature. To be a human being is to be social by nature, to have the values within oneself.

Admittedly, these values must be expressed outwardly in a social and interpersonal structure, and this is where the problem of moral evil, concupiscence, original sin, etc. raises its head within the sphere of practical living. However, rather than constituting a denial of the basic Rogerian position on the fundamental goodness of human nature--his findings pose a genuine challenge to various theologies to re-think their position on and explanation of evil.

As one practical example, it might be fruitful for theologians to consider the question of concupiscence in the light of the findings of Humanistic psychology. It may well be that instead of representing a specific content of human nature passed on from Adam, concupiscence is, instead, a

manifestation of what happens within individual men and women when the fundamentally positive striving of the human organism is somehow frustrated. Self-hatred and anti-social behavior would then be the result of blocking growth rather than an expression of some actually existing inner tendency toward selfishness.

It is indeed tragic that often a person is in despair because of choosing "to be another than himself" as the result of introjecting a social value which is truly positive and important. He hates himself, however, because the value to which he pays lip-service is not one that he has yet had opportunity to discover within himself. As a result, he takes it on and lives it as an alien object. He is co-erced to observing it rather than identifying with it as an extension of himself.

Perhaps this is the vital point where psychology and education touch one another. The real task of the person-teacher is to so put a student in touch with himself and his own experiencing process that the true social values and modes of consciousness inherent within the human organism may be discovered by the student himself. Then, the values and awareness which he arrives at grow out of his own organism-environment rather than simply being alien objects with which he is in a sense forced to cohabit.

In conclusion, then, we can point out that the direction we will follow in this chapter is one that seeks the origins of unitive consciousness not within violence done to automatized perception patterns, but through the quality of awareness associated with congruence and what we will describe as forward movement of the experiencing process. Since this approach treats directly of forms of consciousness associated with the development of maturity in the person, it is much more likely to yield important information on the connection between unitive consciousness and fuller human functioning.

Let us now turn our attention to the first point we wish to discuss--the nature and role of congruence in human development.

1. Congruence and Fuller Human Functioning.

a) The Meaning of Fuller Human Functioning

Since the phrase fuller human functioning is continually employed throughout the dissertation and is of special importance in this chapter, it is important to appreciate exactly what Carl Rogers intends when using these words. Throughout his investigation of optimal human functioning Rogers found that the good life was not simply a static state of drive-reduction, tension-reduction or

homeostasis, but rather a process. It was a direction rather than a destination and there seemed to be definite characteristics associated with the process of continued movement toward fuller human functioning. These appear perhaps most clearly in the marked and sometimes dramatic transformations which take place in therapy, but they are fundamentally the same characteristics present in any human life that is healthy and developing in a positive manner.

According to Rogers, there appear to be at least three vital elements which characterize the process of fuller human functioning. Let us briefly examine them before going on to situate the role of congruence within this development.

The first important characteristic is what Rogers identifies as "an increasing openness to experience". He describes it as follows:

This phrase has come to have more and more meaning for me. It is the polar opposite of defensiveness. Defensiveness I have described in the past as being the organism's response to experiences which are perceived or anticipated as threatening, as incongruent with the individual's existing picture of himself, or of himself in relationship to the world. These threatening experiences are temporarily tendered harmless by being distorted in awareness, or being denied to awareness. I quite literally cannot see, with accuracy, those experiences, feelings, reactions in myself which are significantly at variance with the picture of myself which I already possess. A large part of the process of therapy is the continuing discovery by the client that he is experiencing feelings and attitudes which heretofore he has not been able to be aware of, which he has not been able to "own" as being a part of himself.¹⁶

16 Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, p. 187.

The process of "distorting" or "rendering harmless" certain experiences and feelings which arise within the organism would involve some manifestation of the selection, model building, or category patterns already discussed at some length. The defensive person is divided within himself. He constructs his own Individual Reality (IR), often by being set off in a subject-object manner against his own spontaneous organismic reactions which are significantly out of phase with his current picture of himself. The fully functioning individual, on the other hand, is freer in his relationship to himself and better able to listen to and accept what is going on inside.

If a person could be fully open to his experience [...] every stimulus--whether originating within the organism or in the environment--would be freely relayed through the nervous system without being distorted by any defensive mechanism. There would be no need of the mechanism of "subception" whereby the organism is forewarned of any experience threatening to the self [...]

Thus, one aspect of this process which I am naming "the good life" appears to be a movement away from the pole of defensiveness toward the pole of openness to experience. The individual is becoming more able to listen to himself, to experience what is going on within himself. He is more open to his feelings of fear and discouragement and pain. He is also more open to his feelings of courage, and tenderness, and awe. He is free to live his feelings subjectively, as they exist in him, and also free to be aware of these feelings. He is more able fully to live the experiences of his organism rather than shutting them out of awareness.¹⁷

17 Ibid., p. 187-188.

A second characteristic associated with the process of functioning more fully is what Rogers identifies and labels as "increasingly existential living". It is a fullness of awareness in the present moment that we have seen is a goal of many forms of meditation discussed in preceding chapters. Rogers describes this second characteristic as follows:

I believe it would be evident that for the person who was fully open to his new experience, completely without defensiveness, each moment would be new. The complex configuration of inner and outer stimuli which exists in this moment has never existed before in just this fashion. Consequently such a person would realize that "What I will be in the next moment, and what I will do, grows out of that moment, and cannot be predicted in advance either by me or by others." Not infrequently we find clients expressing exactly this sort of feeling. (Emphasis ours)¹⁸

One reason for freshness of perception within each moment is because the predictability that comes as static defensive patterns and automatizations go into operation is now diminished. While total defenselessness is an ideal goal rather than an achieved reality, nonetheless, when a person is tending in this direction, the perception patterns associated with such a positive process are toned by the goal being sought.

18 Ibid., p. 188.

One way of expressing the fluidity which is present in such existential living is to say that the self and personality emerge from experience, rather than experience being translated or twisted to fit pre-conceived self-structure. It means that one becomes a participant in and an observer of the ongoing process of organismic experience, rather than being in control of it.

Such living in the moment means an absence of rigidity, of tight organization, of the imposition of structure on experience. It means instead a maximum of adaptability, a discovery of structure in experience, a flowing, changing organization of self and personality.¹⁹

Rogers is perhaps even more forceful in his description of existential living when he clearly identifies the defensive patterns we all use to stifle our real experience. Such inhibiting and often highly automatized reactions within the organism block the movement toward fuller human functioning. Existential living, on the other hand,

... involves discovering the structure of experience in the process of living the experience. Most of us [...] bring a preformed structure and evaluation to our experience and never relinquish it, but cram and twist the experience to fit our preconceptions, annoyed at the fluid qualities which make it so unruly in fitting our carefully constructed pigeonholes. To open one's spirit to what is going on now, and to discover in that present process whatever structure it appears to have--this to me is one of the qualities of the good life, the mature life, as I see clients approach it.²⁰

There is an obvious parallel between the "preformed structure and evaluation" of experience with its tendency to

19 Ibid., p. 188-189.

20 Ibid., p. 189.

"cram and twist the experience to fit our preconceptions" and the models and automatizations discussed in the previous chapter. There is a definite consistency with which Dr. Rogers will tend to score precisely the same inhibiting mechanisms within the person that the practitioners of contemplative meditation and various forms of renunciation will identify as hindering movement toward heightened unitive consciousness. However, as we shall see, the approach which Rogers uses to unblock the inhibited forward movement of the experiencing process is radically different from the deautomatizing techniques and methods described in the last chapter. But the common point of agreement between the two approaches lies in recognizing that essentially the same blocking mechanisms are responsible for both inhibition of unitive consciousness as well as forward movement toward fuller human functioning.

The final characteristic which Rogers identifies as present within someone engaged in the process of moving toward fuller human functioning is what he describes as the capacity of such a person to place "an increasing trust in his organism".

In choosing what course of action to take in any situation, many people rely upon guiding principles, upon a code of action laid down by some group or institution, upon the judgment of others (from wife and friends to Emily Post), or upon the way they have behaved in some similar past situation. Yet as I observe the clients whose experiences in living have taught me so much, I find that increasingly such individuals are able to trust their total organismic reaction to a new situation because they discover to an ever-increasing degree that if they are open to their experience, doing what "feels right" proves to be a competent and trustworthy guide to behavior which is truly satisfying.²¹

Such openness and trust is obviously the result of much long-term growth, involving movement away from the defensive manner of contacting the experience of the organism.

In order to qualify his somewhat idealistic (although realizable) statement, Dr. Rogers clearly indicates that

The defects which in most of us make this process untrustworthy are the inclusion of information which does not belong to this present situation, or the exclusion of information which does. It is when memories and previous learnings are fed into the computations as if they were this reality, and not memories and learnings, that erroneous behavioral answers arise. Or when certain threatening experiences are inhibited from awareness, and hence are withheld from the computation or fed into it in distorted form, this too produces error.²²

If there is a central theme running throughout the description of these three characteristics, it is that a major obstacle to fuller human functioning is the defensive

21 Loc. Cit.

22 Ibid., p. 190.

manner in which we often react to our own experience. This is a note which was not stressed in our previous discussion of deautomatization because there the focus of attention was primarily on the fact of various types of automatization and the mechanics involved in breaking the inhibiting patterns, set categories, etc. which resulted from automatic behavior and perception. Rogers has already gone one step further, then, into some of the reasons behind the employment of automatizations. It is not exclusively convenience and conservation of energy but also a defensive reaction against the experiencing of our own organism.

To put this another way, it is as though the organism were somehow in contact with things as they really are, but when the data that flows from such contact does not square with a defensively constructed picture of self that a person may have built up, a tension results between the experiencing of the organism and the rigidly structured model of the self which is held in consciousness. Many of the defensive automatizations which inhibit contact with things as they are, thereby obstructing unitive experience, are actually automatizations used by the person to defend himself against his own experiencing of reality. A kind of inner duality and divisiveness is set up within the person which then gets carried over into every aspect of perception, perpetuating the subject-object pattern that hinders development of an

organismically rooted capacity for unitive consciousness.

On the other hand, a person enjoying increased openness to experience, together with a heightened sense of living in the present and increased trust and acceptance of the responses of his own organism has already a much more unified, integrated approach to his experience of being in the world. He is usually a better tester of reality and a better judge of people because he can allow what is there to come in without overly distorting the data. There is a mirror-like quality to his perception which we have seen is a goal of the art of meditation.

Rogers summarizes his reflections on fuller human functioning and its connection with the feeling process as follows:

I should like to draw together these three threads describing the process of the good life into a more coherent picture. It appears that the person who is psychologically free moves in the direction of becoming a more fully functioning person. He is more able to live fully in and with each and all of his feelings and reactions. He makes increasing use of all his organic equipment to sense, as accurately as possible, the existential within and without. He makes use of all of the information his nervous system can thus supply, using it in awareness, but recognizing that his total organism may be, and often is, wiser than his awareness. He is more able to permit his total organism to function freely in all its complexity in selecting, from the multitude of possibilities, that behavior which in this moment of time will be most generally and genuinely satisfying. He is able to put more trust in his organism in this functioning, not because it is infallible, but because he can be fully open to the consequences of each of his actions and correct them if they prove to be less than satisfying.

He is more able to experience all of his feelings, and is less afraid of any of his feelings; he is his own sifter of evidence, and is more open to evidence from all sources; he is completely engaged in the process of being and becoming himself, and thus discovers that he is soundly and realistically social; he lives more completely in this moment, but learns that this is the soundest living for all time. He is becoming a more fully functioning organism, and because of the awareness of himself which flows freely in and through his experience, he is becoming a more fully functioning person.²³

In summarizing his three characteristics of the fully functioning person--an increased openness to experience, increasingly existential living, and an increased trust in the organism--Rogers stresses that all of these qualities serve to put a person in accepting, open touch with a deeper process of feeling operative within the organism. We shall soon see that it is the forward movement of this feeling or experiencing process, in contrast with its being blocked, incompleted or structure-bound, that is the primary vehicle for growth into fuller human functioning and for development of unitive consciousness. If a person is somehow alienated from his deeper feeling process, a state Rogers characterizes with the term incongruence, then an organismic foundation is lacking both for fuller human functioning and the unitive consciousness associated with it.

23 Ibid., p. 191-192.

As we shall see, if this deeper feeling process is either not contacted or somehow blocked in its development, any unusual perceptual shifts resulting from superficial deautomatizations, which are then interpreted as being forms of unitive consciousness, will continue to depend upon artificial inducement in order to be maintained since an organismic basis for unitive consciousness will be lacking. This state of affairs should lead the serious investigator to question whether such forms of consciousness are either the product of or genuinely contribute to human growth.

The person who is in open accepting contact with this deeper feeling process (i.e. is congruent), will be in a better position to move toward fuller human functioning and, as we hope to show, toward an expression of unitive awareness that will support constructive personality change.

Having discussed the meaning of fuller human functioning, let us now consider the conditions under which movement in this direction has been shown from clinical evidence to be facilitated. The relevance of this material for the present research project is that it provides well researched data that indicates some of the necessary and sufficient circumstances and elements which enable a person to break through their defenses and automatizations. This enables them to contact that deeper process of feeling and experiencing within the organism which grounds a form of unitive consciousness

that grows out of and supports fuller human functioning.

b) The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions
of Constructive Personality Change

Carl Rogers has isolated an important factor which prevents people from being able to mature and grow in their capacity for fuller human functioning. It is what he describes as their inability to be in touch with and accepting their real feelings in any given relationship. This lack of congruence, to use Dr. Rogers' own term, between the way a person sees himself and the process of feeling which constitutes his organismic response to any given situation can create anxiety, inner tension and divisiveness within an individual.

Rogers was quick to note in his early therapy sessions that perceptual shifts which were clinically verifiable and associated with a successful process of therapy were somehow related to a process of feeling taking place within the client resulting from the quality of his relationship with the therapist. This led Rogers to wonder about the psychological conditions which were both necessary and sufficient to bring about what he called "constructive personality change". By this phrase he meant:

... change in the personality structure of the individual, at both surface and deeper levels, in a direction which clinicians would agree means greater integration, less internal conflict, more energy utilizable for effective living; change in behavior away from behaviors generally regarded as immature and toward behaviors regarded as mature.²⁴

Rogers asked himself what elements appeared as necessary and sufficient to initiate such a process of constructive personality change. He then hypothesized on the basis of over twenty-five years experience as a therapist that for this kind of positive growth to take place, the following six conditions had to exist and continue over a period of time:

1. Two persons are in psychological contact.
2. The first, whom we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious.
3. The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is congruent or integrated in the relationship.
4. The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client.
5. The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavors to communicate this experience to the client.
6. The communication to the client of the therapist's empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved.²⁵

Subsequent research and extensive clinical verification established that these six factors were indeed present

²⁴ Carl Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change", in Journal of Consulting Psychology, Vol. 21, 1957, p. 95.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 96.

and contributed to constructive personality change within the therapeutic context. The six points outline those conditions under which an individual is enabled to get more in touch with his own feeling or experiencing process. Furthermore, as we shall see, it is congruence with the experiencing process that results in constructive personality change, fuller human functioning and the modes of unitive consciousness associated with this more complete form of human existence.

We will spell the meaning of this out in greater detail in subsequent sections of this chapter. However, for the present, we can say that these six points represent the way within when unitive consciousness is seen as rooted within the experiencing of the organism. As such, these six conditions are quite different from the way within represented by the techniques of deautomatization described in the previous chapter. This is because contemplative meditation, renunciation and drug usage do not deal directly with the deeper process of feeling or experiencing that we shall see is of immediate concern to Dr. Rogers. Rather, the techniques of deautomatization are described as making unitive perception possible by breaking down more or less deeply ingrained thought categories or perception patterns so that a certain freshness results in awareness. The focus is on reinvesting the automatized elements with conscious attention. But note

that what is directly attended to is the automatization. As it breaks down, it is argued that the freshness of perception and de-differentiation which results is a manifestation of unitive awareness.

The six conditions outlined by Rogers, on the other hand, are pointed directly at the experiencing process, regardless of what automatizations, categories, and perceptual constancies may be operative within the client. It is the experiencing process itself which is the direct object of concern, not the particular strategems a client may use to avoid contacting himself and the world around him. The Rogerian way within takes advantage of inherent power inside the experiencing organism in order to undermine the strength of various automatizations. It does not attack the various blocks by using techniques from the outside to break them down. The necessary and sufficient conditions which concern Rogers are all directed toward revitalizing the client's congruence with an on-going process of feeling taking place within himself. It is at this feeling level that the sense of self as organism-environment finds its most fundamental expression. It is at this level of being, as we hope to show, that the foundations of unitive consciousness find their most profound expression within the human person.

Our present concern is not to exhaustively comment on the six points outlined by Rogers, but rather to examine

the notions of congruence and incongruence which are central to his understanding of the process of human development within the therapeutic relationship. However, we will take this opportunity to summarize two of Dr. Rogers' personal observations on the significance of these six points.

The first is a reference he made to the six conditions (especially the last three) in his book On Becoming a Person. Here he referred to what he called a basic condition for successful therapy in the client-centered orientation.

If we were studying the process of growth in plants, we would assume certain constant conditions of temperature, moisture and sunlight, in forming our conceptualization of the process. Likewise in conceptualizing the process of personality change in psychotherapy, I shall assume a constant and optimal set of conditions for facilitating this change [...] For our present purpose I believe I can state this assumed condition in one word. Throughout the discussion which follows, I shall assume that the client experiences himself as being fully received. By this I mean that whatever his feelings--~~fear~~, despair, insecurity, anger, whatever his mode of expression--silence, gestures, tears, or words; whatever he finds himself being in this moment, he senses that he is psychologically received, just as he is, by the therapist. There is implied in this term the concept of being understood, empathically, and the concept of acceptance. It is also well to point out that it is the client's experience of this condition which makes it optimal, not merely the fact of its existence in the therapist.

In all that I shall say, then, about the process of change, I shall assume as a constant an optimal and maximum condition of being received.²⁶

26 Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, p. 130-131.

The experience of being fully received on the part of the client obviously does not refer to some superficial technique used by the therapist of simply parroting back the client's verbal content in different words--an over-simplified objection which has sometimes been levelled against Rogers' approach. Rather, it refers to a level of organismic feeling and experiencing which is communicated. The counselor must genuinely care for the person he is with and be skillful enough to get so close to his client's deeper feeling or experiencing process that he can communicate his oneness with the client in this profound depth of his being as it is gradually revealed during the process of therapy.

The experience of being fully received, in a sense, summarizes the content of the last three of Rogers' six conditions for initiating a process of constructive personality change. It is this experience which represents a crucial ingredient in creating a proper climate for contacting the deeper feeling process in a person, thereby opening up the possibility of subsequent forward movement. In the final analysis, it is the unblocking and forward movement of this feeling process that results in unitive consciousness, not simply the breaking down of a particular automatization which might be only indirectly connected with that process.

The second important reference which Dr. Rogers makes to his six points comes in the form of what he describes as

significant omissions within the theoretical framework that guides his activity as a therapist. These omissions clearly set his approach off from much that is accepted in present-day clinical practice. Familiarity with some of these omissions may better acquaint the reader with some of the value choices and judgments made by client-centered therapists in their approach to the question of fuller human functioning. Briefly stated, the summary in Rogers' own words is as follows:

... it is not stated that these conditions apply to one type of client, and that other conditions are necessary to bring about psychotherapeutic change with other types of client [...] Because of the heavy weight of clinical opinion to the contrary, it is with some "fear and trembling" that I advance the concept that the essential conditions of psychotherapy exist in a single configuration, even though the client or patient may use them very differently.

It is not stated that these six conditions are the essential conditions for client-centered therapy, and that other conditions are essential for other types of psychotherapy. I certainly am heavily influenced by my own experience, and that experience has led me to a viewpoint which is termed "client centered." Nevertheless my aim in stating this theory is to state the conditions which apply to any situation in which constructive personality change occurs, whether we are thinking of classical psychoanalysis, or any of its modern offshoots, or Adlerian psychotherapy, or any other [...]

It is not stated that psychotherapy is a special kind of relationship, different in kind from all others which occur in everyday life. It will be evident instead that for brief moments, at least, many good friendships fulfill the six conditions [...]

It is not stated that special intellectual professional knowledge--psychological, psychiatric, medical, or religious--is required of the therapist [...] It troubles me to hold such a radical point of view, but I can draw no other conclusion from my experience.

Intellectual training and the acquiring of information has, I believe, many valuable results--but becoming a therapist is not one of these results [...]

It is not stated that it is necessary for psychotherapy that the therapist have an accurate psychological diagnosis of the client. Here too it troubles me to hold a viewpoint so at variance with my clinical colleagues. When one thinks of the vast proportion of time spent in any psychological, psychiatric, or mental hygiene center on the exhaustive psychological evaluation of the client or patient, it seems as though this must serve a useful purpose insofar as psychotherapy is concerned. Yet the more I have observed therapists [...] the more I am forced to the conclusion that such diagnostic knowledge is not essential to psychotherapy. It may even be that its defense as a necessary prelude to psychotherapy is simply a protective alternative to the admission that it is, for the most part, a colossal waste of time. There is only one useful purpose I have been able to observe which relates to psychotherapy. Some therapists cannot feel secure in the relationship with the client unless they possess such diagnostic knowledge. Without it they feel fearful of him, unable to be empathic, unable to experience unconditional regard, finding it necessary to put up a presence in the relationship. If they know in advance of suicidal impulses they can somehow be more acceptant of them. Thus, for some therapists, the security they perceive in diagnostic information may be a basis for permitting themselves to be integrated in the relationship and to experience empathy and full acceptance. In these instances a psychological diagnosis would certainly be justified as adding to the comfort and hence the effectiveness of the therapist. But even here it does not appear to be a basic precondition for psychotherapy.²⁷

It must be added that on the last point, Rogers does not intend to maintain that diagnostic evaluation is useless. Rather, it is its usefulness as a precondition for effective

²⁷ Carl Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change", p. 100-102 passim.

psychotherapy which he questions.

If there is a central theme running throughout these significant omissions in the theoretical formulation of the client-centered approach, it is that successful therapy is fundamentally a heightened form of successful living. In other words, it is Rogers' considered opinion, based on nearly a quarter of a century's experience as a therapist and on the basis of clinical tests conducted not just within the approach of client-centered therapy, that the six points which he lists are the predominant factors operative in the movement toward fuller human functioning as such. This is regardless of the particular context within which growth occurs.

The significance of this conclusion for our own investigation is quite clear. In approaching the question of unitive consciousness emerging from the fully functioning person as it is described within a specifically Rogerian or client-centered approach we are dealing with a more universal dynamic process that is not restricted to a particular therapeutic orientation in psychology. The conclusions we will reach are not restricted to the occurrence of unitive consciousness within an isolated segment of the therapeutic spectrum.

Now, let us go one step further. Close examination of the six conditions which Rogers has listed will show that

really the notions of congruence and incongruence are the main structural supports of his approach. This is because unconditional positive regard, empathic understanding, and the successful communication of the therapist's understanding and regard to the client all depend upon a growing degree of congruence within both people in the relationship.

c) Congruence and Incongruence

The notions of congruence and incongruence are fundamental to the entire approach to constructive personality change initiated by Dr. Rogers. They are also vital for our own research into the movement toward unitive consciousness within religious experience in that they open up research opportunities for investigating unusual unitive perception shifts arising from constructive changes within the organism rather than from a somewhat artificial tampering with the mechanisms of perception through various ascetical and contemplative techniques which can disturb habitual patterns. If we can penetrate this process of feeling together with the perceptual shifts associated with its development, we may discover invaluable data to help us in our study of unitive religious consciousness.

An important contribution of Third Force psychology may be to show that there is a biological basis for the so-called spiritual life in that prized unitive experiences

naturally flow out of the human organism when it is moving in a positive, healthy growth pattern. Such a conclusion, if sufficiently established, might eventually yield various criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of many of the traditional ascetical and meditative practices used in all the major religions. It may well be that there is an important growth factor stemming from within the organism itself which is responsible for movement toward fuller human functioning in the religious or spiritual life, and that this has not been sufficiently taken into consideration by those who study religious development.

To return, then, to Dr. Rogers, we will begin by considering his meaning of the terms incongruence and congruence insofar as they represent the core elements marking the process of constructive personality change. He describes the term incongruence as follows:

Incongruence is a basic construct in the theory we have been developing. It refers to a discrepancy between the actual experience of the organism and the self picture of the individual insofar as it represents that experience. Thus a student may experience, at a total or organismic level, a fear of the university and of examinations which are given on the third floor of a certain building, since these may demonstrate a fundamental inadequacy in him. Since such a fear of his inadequacy is decidedly at odds with his concept of himself, this experience is represented (distortedly) in his awareness as an unreasonable fear of climbing stairs in this building, or any building, and soon an unreasonable fear of crossing the open campus. Thus there is a fundamental discrepancy between the experienced meaning of the situation as it registers in his organism and the symbolic representation of that experience in awareness in such a way that it does not conflict with the picture he has of himself. In this case to admit a fear of inadequacy would contradict the picture he holds of himself; to admit incomprehensible fears does not contradict his self concept.²⁸

Rogers goes on to point out that when an individual is not aware of incongruence within himself he is merely vulnerable to the possibility of anxiety and disorganization. If, however, such a person should dimly perceive such incongruence then anxiety tension is a direct result of such awareness.

We readily pick up incongruence in people whom we sense always seem to be playing a role, tending to say things they don't feel or who always seem to be operating from behind a facade. We often find that we are unwilling to reveal ourselves too deeply to such people.

28 Ibid., p. 96-97.

On the other hand, we all know individuals whom we instinctively trust because we sense that they are being what they are, that we are dealing with the person himself and not with a polite or professional facade. Organismically, we pick up the unity in such people, in that they are not unaware of or unduly threatened by their real feelings in a situation. They are not divided against themselves and largely oblivious to their real motives for the way they act in certain circumstances. They are congruent.

Everett Shostrom put it succinctly when writing that: "By congruence we mean being able to feel our feelings physiologically, to communicate them accurately, and to experience them consciously."²⁹

The third of the six conditions which Carl Rogers drew up for the initiation of a process of successful therapy is what he referred to as the therapist's genuineness (or congruence) in the relationship. By this he meant that

²⁹ Everett L. Shostrom, Man the Manipulator, Bantam, New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1968, p. 47.

... the therapist should be, within the confines of this relationship, a congruent, genuine, integrated person. It means that within the relationship he is freely and deeply himself, with his actual experience accurately represented by his awareness of himself. It is the opposite of presenting a facade, either knowingly or unknowingly.

It is not necessary (nor is it possible) that the therapist be a paragon who exhibits this degree of integration, of wholeness, in every aspect of his life. It is sufficient that he is accurately himself in this hour of this relationship, that in this basic sense he is what he actually is, in this moment of time.³⁰

We might summarize, for purposes of the dissertation, and say that congruence implies a fundamental unity within the person in that the content of feelings which are actively engaged in any situation or relationship are accurately and acceptingly represented within the conscious awareness of the individual who has them. There is little or no defensive separation between the self-picture held in one's consciousness and the more organismic process of experiencing which may be out of phase with the current image of self. It should be obvious that if such fundamental congruence and unity is not operative within a person, then, there is really little basis within the organism for unitive experience with the external world.

Now, since congruence, in the Rogerian sense of the term, refers to the relationship between the actual experience

³⁰ Carl Rogers, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change", p. 97.

of the organism and the self picture of the individual insofar as it represents that experience, it is important to have an understanding of the experiencing with which one is congruent in awareness.

d) Characteristics of the Experiencing Process

Dr. Eugene T. Gendlin has developed the construct of experiencing³¹ within the client-centered framework and we will rely on his formulation to help us better understand this important process which we hope to show is closely associated in the congruent person with development of a capacity for unitive consciousness. We will briefly introduce the concept at this point and then develop it more at length later when we compare congruence as an occasion for shifts in perception with similar shifts which can result from a simple deautomatization of perception as we have described it in the last chapter.

Gendlin develops the notion of experiencing by noting what he has identified as six of its characteristics.

³¹ Eugene T. Gendlin, Experiencing and the Creation of Meaning, New York, MacMillan, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962.

(1) Experiencing is a process of feeling

Experiencing is felt, rather than thought, known, or verbalized [...] When therapists discuss cases, they use rough metaphoric terms to refer to a feeling process. They often say that they observe clients "emotionally absorbing something," or "working through," or "feeling through." The therapeutic process is observed to involve not only concepts, but also a feeling process, which I would like to call "experiencing."³²

To formulate this another way, experiencing should be looked upon as a process of feeling rather than intellectual or abstract understanding. An important goal of the therapist is not simply an accurate diagnosis of the problem which is then communicated to the client in conceptual language. Rather, it is to involve the client in his own feeling process and this is something which cannot be accomplished simply by abstractly talking about it (however accurate the talking may be).

³² Eugene T. Gendlin, "Experiencing: A Variable in the Process of Therapeutic Change", in American Journal of Psychotherapy, Vol. 15, 1961, p. 234.

(2) Experiencing occurs in the immediate present

Genuine psychotherapy (begins) [...] at the point of going beyond the intellectual approach by helping the patient to an immediate, present experiencing of his problems. Even though the problems may concern events which occurred early in life, therapeutic change in these problems requires a present experiencing, that is to say a present feeling process. Freud achieved this present immediacy by discovering manifestations of the patient's problems in the present moment of the relationship between doctor and patient. In this way the patient could be helped to grapple with his problems on an emotional level and in the immediate present.³³

This is really another way of saying that a blocked feeling process cannot be lived through in absentia. We cannot abstractly think through a feeling situation in the past, but must somehow enter relationships or devise techniques which act as a catalyst for the emergence of real feelings about self, others and situations now. This is one of the aims of Gestalt Therapy with its stress on the here and now, and also of psychodrama where situations begin by being acted out in a mock manner but soon shift to deadly seriousness as real feelings are engaged in the play acting of the present moment.

33 Ibid., p. 234-235.

(3) Experiencing is a direct referent

... Experiencing can be directly referred to by an individual as a felt datum in his own phenomenal field. Very frequently, during therapy hours, clients may be observed to refer directly to their experiencing. Experiencing itself is, of course, private and unobservable. However, gestures, tone of voice, manner of expression, as well as the context of what is said are often observable indications of direct reference to experiencing. Certain characteristic forms of verbal expression are also observable indices of direct reference to experiencing. When a client refers directly to his experiencing, he is likely to use some demonstrative pronouns like "this" or "it" or "that all tied-up feeling." His verbal expressions indicate that he is pointing to a felt datum within himself [...]

Clients frequently speak of feeling something without knowing what it is they feel. Both client and counselor call such a feeling "this feeling" and continue to communicate about it although neither person knows just what that feeling is. At such times, both persons directly refer to the client's ongoing experiencing. They do so without a conceptualization of what the client refers to. The symbols used (such as the term "this") do not conceptualize. They do not formulate anything. They only point. Such symbols are neither accurate nor inaccurate. They convey no information about the feeling, they only refer to it. I am giving the name "direct reference" to such pointing to present experiencing.³⁴

Anxiety is a prime example of a direct referent which in most instances cannot be fully conceptualized. The vague feeling of uneasiness, the gnawing apprehension that seems to always remain with a person and rob him of his enjoyment and full focused attention on each passing moment-- these are forces whose presence people often freely

³⁴ Ibid., p. 235.

acknowledge but without being able to say very much about them.

(4) Experiencing guides conceptualization

A fourth characteristic of experiencing lies in the client's use of it to guide him toward increasingly accurate conceptualizations. A client may feel a feeling and refer to it for quite some time before attempting a formation of it in terms of concepts. When he has attempted such a first formulation he often considers what he has just said and then feels: "yes, that's it!" or, "no, that isn't quite it." Often he does not know how what is said differs from what he feels, but he knows it differs. In these examples it is clear that the client refers directly to his experiencing, and is checking his first rough conceptual formulations against his present experiencing. In this way present experiencing guides conceptualizations.³⁵

The implications of this fourth characteristic are that there are modes of knowing which have little or nothing to do with conceptualization as such. It is as though conceptualization represented a different kind of language, and when this other language comes close to representing what is being spoken within the experiencing process we can speak of a more or less accurate translation.

35 Ibid, p. 236.

(5) Experiencing is implicitly meaningful

The fact that direct reference to experiencing can guide conceptualization, implies a fifth characteristic of experiencing: It is implicitly meaningful. The implicit meaning is only felt, and may not become explicit until later. Yet this implicit meaning can guide conceptualization.

Here is something we call a "feeling," something felt in a physical sense, yet later on the individual will say that certain concepts now accurately represent that feeling. The feeling, he will say, was such and so all along, but he didn't know it. He only felt it. He felt it in such a unique and specific way that he could gradually, by directly referring to it, arrive at concepts for it. That is to say, the feeling was implicitly meaningful. It had a meaning which was distinguishably different from other feelings and meanings, but its meaning was felt rather than known in explicit symbols.³⁶

Gendlin cites the following example of how a felt implicit meaning can become conceptualized:

36 Ibid., p. 237.

A person may say "I have to go to a meeting tonight, but for some reason I don't want to go." Now, from this verbal content we have no way of getting at why he doesn't want to go. Only he has a way of getting at the feelings and this way lies through direct reference to his present experiencing about it. As he refers directly to his present experiencing he may say, "Well, I don't know what it is, but I sure don't want to go." He may continue to refer to his present experiencing and it may change even without further conceptual formulation. Or, as he continues to refer to it, he may say, "H-mm, I don't want to go because Mr. X will be there and he will argue with me and I hate that." This verbal content will have arisen for him from a direct reference--a direct grappling with his present experiencing. Nor is this all the meaning that might emerge as he grapples with his present experiencing. A little later he may say, "Oh, it isn't that I hate arguing with Mr. X; actually I love to argue with him, but I'm afraid he will make fun of me when I get excited in arguing." In this example, the individual forms concepts on the basis of direct references to his experiencing. He is not simply using certain concepts which accurately say something about him. He is not deducing from his behavior that he is afraid of being ridiculed. Rather he forms the conceptualizations on the basis of direct reference to present experiencing.³⁷

The final characteristic listed by Gendlin is one that makes an important point by distinguishing the pre-conceptual experiencing process from the working of the unconscious.

37 Ibid., p. 237-238.

(6) Experiencing is a preconceptual organismic process

I would like to distinguish implicit felt meaning from what is usually called "unconscious," or "denied to awareness." Implicit meaning is often unconceptualized in awareness. However, the experiencing of the felt datum is conscious. Only because it is conscious can the client feel it, refer to it, talk about it, attempt to conceptualize it, and check the accuracy of his conceptualizations against it. The implicit meaning of experiencing is felt in awareness, although the many complex meanings of one such feeling may not have been conceptualized before.³⁸

So much for a brief introduction to the construct of experiencing, so integral to our development of the role of congruence in constructive personality change and development of an enhanced capacity for unitive consciousness. The important point to remember is that we are dealing with an organismic process that is a direct referent and which need not always be put into words in order to function positively within awareness, thereby making a constructive contribution to the growth of a person.

We have now looked at some of the elements involved in the process of becoming a more fully functioning person, briefly considered Carl Rogers' summary of the necessary and sufficient conditions of constructive personality change, and been introduced to Dr. Gendlin's outline of characteristics describing the experiencing process with which a growing person attempts to become more congruent in order to

³⁸ Ibid., p. 238.

effectively mature. All this material is integral to an investigation of the process of feeling which Rogers focuses attention on, and which we believe is responsible for significant shifts in perception that can influence unitive consciousness and thereby affect the quality of primary religious experience.

Let us now consider the process of constructive therapeutic change as outlined by Dr. Rogers in order to see whether or not we can discern a distinct perceptual shift taking place which could have important bearing on our study of unitive consciousness. After that, we will attempt to probe deeper into this process of organismic experiencing as it unfolds within the therapeutic setting. Once we have identified certain inner elements involved in this process, we will then compare them with the dynamics of a simple deautomatization of perception. The purpose of this comparison, in line with our original questions about evolving criteria for determining whether certain ascetical and religious practices contribute to fuller human functioning, will be to see whether data coming from the Humanistic psychologists can help us discern what constitutes constructive personality change within religious experiencing and what does not.

e) A Process Conception of Human Growth and
Unitive Consciousness--Viewed within
a Client-Centered Framework

In a paper read in 1957, Carl Rogers tried to formulate the events of therapy as a quality of movement, rather than describing them in terms of static outcomes. He observed changes in the way the client related to his own feelings and changes in the manner and quality of his experiencing. Immersing himself in the events of therapeutic growth, Rogers sought to discover some kind of generalization underlying the varying elements of change that appeared throughout the process. He hypothesized that the process of human growth in therapy "... lies along a continuum from fixity to integrated fluidity",³⁹ which he outlined as follows:

... one end of the continuum may be described as a rigid, static, undifferentiated, unfeeling, impersonal type of psychological functioning. The individual is remote from his feelings and his experiencing, perceives in terms of rigid constructs, fears close relationships, maintains a concept of self which is fixed and at variance with his organismic experiencing, and is unwilling to express or communicate himself. The other end of the continuum is described as a level of functioning marked by changingness, acceptant experiencing of personal feelings in the immediate present, sharp differentiation of feelings and meanings, tentatively held constructs, a fluid self which is synonymous with experience (being the subjective awareness of that experience), and an ability to live freely in relationship.⁴⁰

39 Carl Rogers, "Significant Trends in the Client-Centered Orientation", in Progress in Clinical Psychology, Lawrence E. Abt and Bernard F. Riess, Eds., New York, Grune and Stratton, 1960, p. 91.

40 Loc. Cit.

If we recall Dr. LeShan's outline of the general movement in consciousness from that of the classical physics approach with its stress on individual boundaries and cut-off points (the Sensory-Individual Reality (S-IR) approach), toward the field-theory (C-IR) end of the continuum, we can observe that there are certain grounds for comparing his hypothetical description of the progression in mental states of the mystic with those outlined by Dr. Rogers.

According to LeShan, the Individual Reality or manner of perceiving oneself-in-the-world undergoes a definite change as a person moves toward developing the quality of consciousness described by the field-theory approach. It is a movement away from the need for fixed boundaries toward a more relaxed, open perception of the more general gestalt or unified field within which one finds oneself as an integral part. While LeShan's focus is, to a large extent, centered on the resolution of the subject-object dichotomy which impedes the possibility of greater unitive experiences, Dr. Rogers' attention is mainly on the experiencing organism and the subtle dynamics at work within the person's sense of self which accompany the breakdown between rigid subject-object barriers.

As we have already seen in our previous comments on congruence and incongruence, anxiety and defensive behavior result when an individual begins to perceive discrepancies

between his organismic experience and his firmly organized and consciously held picture of himself.

As long as the self-gestalt is firmly organized, and no contradictory material is even dimly perceived, then positive self feelings may exist, the self may be seen as worthy and acceptable, and conscious tension is minimal [...] It is when his organized self-structure is no longer effective in meeting his needs in the reality situation, or when he dimly perceives discrepancies in himself, or when his behavior seems out of control and no longer consistent with himself, that he becomes "ripe," as it were, for therapy.⁴¹

In a constructive relationship with the therapist the client gradually experiences a freedom from threat (largely because of the unconditional positive regard, the empathic understanding and successful communication of these to the client). When beginning to describe what then happens within the client as the process of therapy unfolds, it is interesting to note that Rogers' clinical experience leads him to use language which closely follows the theoretical development in states of consciousness outlined by LeShan.

⁴¹ Carl Rogers, Client-Centered Therapy, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1951, p. 191-192.

In this atmosphere of safety, protection, and acceptance, the firm boundaries of self-organization relax. There is no longer the firm, tight gestalt which is characteristic of every organization under threat, but a looser, more uncertain configuration. He begins to explore his perceptual field more and more fully. He discovers faulty generalizations, but his self-structure is now sufficiently relaxed so that he can consider the complex and contradictory experiences upon which they are based. He discovers experiences of which he has never been aware, which are deeply contradictory to the perception he has of himself, and this is threatening indeed. He retreats temporarily to the former comfortable gestalt, but then slowly and cautiously moves out to assimilate this contradictory experience into a new and revised pattern.⁴²

This passage merits a few additional comments. "The firm boundary of self-organization relaxes." With the loosening of barriers within and gradual acceptance and trust in one's own organism and process of experiencing, it is easy to see how there would be a corresponding openness to external reality as well. Previously dreaded contacts may now be approached with a renewed freshness of perception once there has been a lessening of fear and tension caused by the reaction which they originally evoked. When a person can be acceptingly open to his experience and does not need to screen out or block certain organismic reactions, it stands to reason that he can be more open to that which occasions the reaction. He can perceive it more accurately in itself, and move toward having the kind of unitive being-cognition

42 Ibid., p. 193.

about which Abraham Maslow has written.

"The firm, tight defensive self-organization-under-threat relaxes." The models, categories, and automatizations which previously regimented and restricted a person's experience of self now begin to loosen. An important end product of contemplative meditation and asceticism is thereby achieved in the breaking down of the old structure--but in this instance it is a transformation within the feeling and experiencing process which is the principal element responsible for the perceptual transformations that will gradually intensify as the therapeutic encounter is more and more successful.

As the rigid, defensive self-structure relaxes because of a person's changed relationship to his own feelings and experiencing process, and the organism slips into "a looser, more uncertain configuration", the models which previously regulated perceptual patterns are sufficiently shaken so that the person can be more open to perceive and become one with himself and the external world around him. There is a kind of reconstruction which takes place within the sense of self throughout this process of human growth.

Essentially this is a process of disorganization and reorganization, and while it is going on it may be decidedly painful. It is deeply confusing not to have a firm concept of self by which to determine behavior appropriate to the situation. It is frightening or disgusting to find self and behavior fluctuating almost from day to day, at times being largely in accord with the earlier self-pattern, at times being in confused accord with some new, vaguely structured gestalt. As the process continues, a new or revised configuration of self is being constructed. It contains perceptions which were previously denied. It involves more accurate symbolization of a much wider range of sensory and visceral experience. It involves a reorganization of values, with the organism's own experience clearly recognized as providing the evidence for the valuations. There slowly begins to emerge a new self, which to the client seems to be much more his "real" self, because it is based to a much greater extent upon all of his experience, perceived without distortion.⁴³

The disorganization and reorganization is made possible because "... the new, the tentative, the contradictory, or the previously denied perceptions of self are as much valued by the therapist as the rigidly structured aspects".⁴⁴ The client feels he is being "fully received" with what he considers to be both the positive and negative aspects of his personality in full view. It thereby becomes possible for him within the relationship to begin opening to newer modes of perception that are not so defensive or stereotyped according to a strict subject-object dichotomy. The "looser, more uncertain configuration" moves a person perceptually in

43 Loc. Cit.

44 Ibid., p. 194.

the direction of the field theory end of the perceptual continuum.

Let us examine how this happens by looking more closely at Carl Rogers' discrimination of what he considers to be seven stages in the emerging continuum of his own process conception of human growth as it moves from "fixity to integrated fluidity". Then, after considering the external manifestations of the process as seen from the outside, we will go into the actual inner dynamics whereby movement toward increased congruence and the development of more unitive perceptual patterns within the experiencing process actually take place. Afterwards we will compare this kind of development with a simple deautomatization of perception. But first the process of growth itself.

Individuals move, I began to see, not from a fixity or homeostasis through change to a new fixity, though such a process is indeed possible. But much the more significant continuum is from fixity to changingness, from rigid structure to flow, from stasis to process. I formed the tentative hypothesis that perhaps the qualities of the client's expression at any point might indicate his position on this continuum, might indicate where he stood in the process of change.

I gradually developed this concept of a process, discriminating seven stages in it, though I would stress that it is a continuum, and that whether one discriminated three stages or fifty, there would still be all the intermediate points.

I came to feel that a given client, taken as a whole, usually exhibits behaviors which cluster about a relatively narrow range on this continuum. That is, it is unlikely that in one area of his life the client would exhibit complete fixity, and in another area complete changingness. He would tend, as a whole, to be at some stage in this process.⁴⁵

45 Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, p. 131.

The First Stage

In the development from fixity to flowingness there is movement in the quality of a person's way of expressing himself from a position nearer the rigid end of the continuum to one closer to the in-motion end of the continuum. The first stage, as it appears either in the therapeutic setting or any situation where growth producing factors are available to be brought into contact with a blocked or incongruent individual, represents a stage where there is great unwillingness on the part of the incongruent person to communicate his real self. Feelings are not even recognized, let alone owned as one's own. The sense of self is extremely rigid and close communicative relationships which might challenge this static structure are considered quite dangerous by the person. There is practically no openness to the experiencing process and much blockage of internal communication. Rogers notes that such a person is "... structure-bound in his manner of experiencing. That is, he reacts 'to the situation of now by finding it to be like a past experience and reacting to that past, feeling it'".⁴⁶

This stage represents the extreme position where the models, categories, or hypnozes from the past are so rigid and strong within an individual that he is incapable of

46 Ibid., p. 133.

genuinely and openly experiencing the here and now. Rather, any situation is automatically interpreted as being like a given past experience, and the habitual response to that past experience is re-played in the present circumstances whether or not it is appropriate. The model, category, or neural path, as Evelyn Underhill referred to it, is fully in place and operative at this point in the person's blocked development so that further forward movement is almost impossible.

The Second Stage

When a person in the first stage gradually experiences and realizes that he is being fully received, he can then begin to work at the blockage or unproductive patterns of response and perception which hinder further constructive growth. However, he approaches the block not by attacking it from the outside with a technique for deautomatizing the static perception patterns associated with it, but rather by moving on to the next stage of developing congruence with his feeling process which the experience of being fully received makes possible.

By this point a slight loosening and flowing of expression can begin to take place. For example, the person feels freer to speak more about non-self topics and about personal problems even though they are still perceived as

external to himself--"Example: 'Disorganization keeps cropping up in my life'.⁴⁷

The choice of words used to describe feelings show that they are still unowned by the person or looked on as a past object.

Example: Counselor: "If you want to tell me something of what brought you here [...]" Client: "The symptom was--it was--just being very depressed." This is an excellent example of the way in which internal problems can be perceived and communicated about as entirely external. She is not saying "I am depressed" or even "I was depressed." Her feeling is handled as a remote, unowned object, entirely external to self.⁴⁸

The dualism between process of experiencing and picture of self are still far apart showing a high degree of incongruence. Furthermore, since the person is still holding their own experiencing at arm's length, they continue to perpetuate the lack of unity within themselves which hinders them from really being open to approach external reality more as it is in itself without continually distorting and refracting it through the grid of their own unanswered needs. However, some progress has been made at this point. The supportive environment and experience of being fully received has allowed a certain loosening and freer flow of expression.

47 Loc. Cit.

48 Ibid., p. 134.

The Third Stage

In the third stage there is the first glimmering of a recognition of contradictions in experience, discrepancies between the picture of self and the actual experience of the organism. There is still very little acceptance of feelings, and experiencing is still described as in the past or somewhat remote from the self. There is, however, a much freer flow of expression about the self as an object, and even open recognition of self as a reflected object, existing primarily in others.

Example: "I can feel myself smiling sweetly the way my mother does, or being gruff and important the way my father does sometimes--slipping into everyone else's personalities but mine.⁴⁹

In this example the person recognizes their programmed way of perceiving and responding and its distinction from their real self, without yet being able to say very much about their real self or the process of feeling and experiencing which is uniquely and distinctly their own. However, the experience of being fully received has brought them a long way. They are finally at the point where they are aware that there are models, perception patterns, and various ingrained constructs conditioning them in their response and actually hindering them from really knowing themselves and

49 Ibid., p. 135.

the world around them.

One is reminded of Evelyn Underhill's earlier description of the awakening of the self, and its connection with the question: what is reality? By stage three, even though the person may not yet be aware of their own real feelings in the here and now, they have, nonetheless, reached a point where they are able to recognize and admit that much of what they live is not their own reality, but someone else's. Their experience of being fully received encourages them to risk penetrating their own lack of congruence to the point where there is the first real glimmer of awakening to the possibility of a reality other than the stereotyped, defensive one which they have been forced to live.

The Fourth Stage

When a person feels fully received in the revelations which accompany his development through stage three then a much more rapid loosening of constructs, models and rigid patterns occurs. There is now a freer flow of feelings characteristic of his movement along the continuum from rigidity to integrated fluidity. A person at this stage will tend to describe more intense feelings of the "not-now-present" type--"Example: 'Well, I was really--it hit me down deep'".⁵⁰ The communication of feelings moves from a

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 137.

description of them as objects in the past to being objects in the present. Occasionally a real feeling is expressed as in the present--often even seeming to break through almost against the person's wishes.

Example: A client, after discussing a dream including a bystander, dangerous because of having observed his "crimes," says to the therapist, "Oh, all right, I don't trust you."⁵¹

The awakening to one's own reality has now progressed to the point where there is a definite tendency toward experiencing feelings in the immediate present. But there is also a fear and distrust of this possibility.

Example: "I feel bound--by something or other. It must be me! There's nothing else that seems to be doing it. I can't blame it on anything else. There's this knot--somewhere inside of me [...]. It makes me want to get mad--and cry--and run away."⁵²

There is still little open acceptance of feelings. The use of "it" to refer to the painful, knot-like feeling shows that the person is still not owning that feeling. He is still holding it at arm's length as something other than himself. He is still maintaining the inner division and perpetuating the disunity which prevents his entry into the full flow of his own experiencing and feeling which is his here and now response within the field situation of which

51 Loc. Cit.

52 Loc. Cit.

he is an integral expression. However, he is no longer unaware of his inner division.

There is a loosening of the way experience is construed. There are some discoveries of personal constructs; there is the definite recognition of these as constructs; and there is a beginning questioning of their validity.

Example: "It amuses me. Why? Oh, because it's a little stupid of me--and I feel a little tense about it, or a little embarrassed,--and a little helpless. (His voice softens and he looks sad.) Humor has been my bulwark all my life; maybe it's a little out of place in trying to really look at myself. A curtain to pull down [...] I feel sort of at a loss right now. Where was I? What was I saying? I lost my grip on something--that I've been holding myself up with." Here there seems illustrated the jolting, shaking consequences of questioning a basic construct, in this case his use of humor as a defense.⁵³

Not only are personal constructs recognized at this point, but almost unconsciously in this instance the person has moved from language like: There's something sort of wrong with me--it's a sort of feeling I sometimes have of being lost, to the simple blunt statement: I feel sort of at a loss right now. A real measure of congruence has broken through, and the person's self-picture and feeling process are recognized, owned and lived as one. Such a statement at this early stage might be almost inadvertent, but it is a beginning sign of a radical change in the quality of a person's relationship to his own feeling or experiencing process.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 138.

The models, constructs and perceptual constancies, or whatever name is chosen to characterize the static blockages which hinder constructive movement toward fuller human functioning are now being recognized and questioned.

There is a realization of concern about contradictions and incongruences between experience and self.

Example: "I'm not living up to what I am. I really really should be doing more than I am. How many hours I spent on the job in this position with Mother saying, 'Don't come out 'till you've done something.' Produce! [...] That happened with lots of things."

This is both an example of concern about contradictions and a questioning of the way in which experience has been construed.⁵⁴

It is worth adding a reminder at this point regarding the stated purpose of this dissertation in its investigation of primary religious experience and the ascetical and contemplative practices associated with it which may or may not contribute significantly to fuller human functioning. The description of various stages along the continuum from fixity to integrated fluidity gives us an indication of at least one way in which blockages and the incongruence which characterizes inner division and the perpetuation of the subject-object dichotomy can be resolved--and resolved from a clinical point of view in such a way that a more mature person emerges as a result of such growth progress. The question of unitive

54 Loc. Cit.

consciousness and experience is not the primary point being emphasized by Dr. Rogers. Nonetheless, it should be clear that the resolution of defensive barriers and blocks to awareness of one's own experiencing process is an integral part of any development of unitive consciousness naturally flowing out of the maturing human organism. If the sensing organism is largely responsible for much of the experience of tied-in-ness with the world around us according to the field theory model or interpretation of reality, then it stands to reason that anything which can open up the capacity of a person to be aware of, accept and finally trust the delicate signals welling forth from his own organismic experiencing process will actively contribute to the development of a greater capacity for unitive consciousness. To the extent that an individual is cut off from his own experiencing process, he is ipso facto cut off from the possibility of genuine contemplation. He is isolated from that quality of being-cognition and unitive experience stemming from organismic readiness, as contrasted with a simple deautomatization of perception which, as we hope to show, is not necessarily connected with maturity and congruence within the experiencing organism.

Let us now continue with our examination of the seven stages that Dr. Rogers has outlined before spending a little time going into the actual inner dynamics of the unfolding

experiencing process. In the movement from incongruence to greater congruence, it is forward movement in this experiencing which lays an organismic foundation for greater unitive consciousness and fuller human functioning.

The Fifth Stage

At this point Rogers makes an important qualification intended as a response to those who might find his seven-fold division of the process of therapeutic growth too artificial in its breakdown to various clearly defined stages.

It may be well to remind ourselves again that a person is never wholly at one or another stage of the process. Listening to interviews and examining typescripts causes me to believe that a given client's expressions in a given interview may be made up, for example, of expressions and behaviors mostly characteristic of stage three, with frequent instances of rigidity characteristic of stage two or the greater loosening of stage four. It does not seem likely that one will find examples of stage six in such an interview.

The foregoing refers to the variability in the general stage of the process in which the client finds himself. If we limit ourselves to some defined area of related personal meanings in the client, then I would hypothesize much more regularity; that stage three would rarely be found before stage two; that stage four would rarely follow stage two without stage three intervening. It is this kind of tentative hypothesis which can, of course, be put to empirical test.⁵⁵

If a person feels fully received in the revelations and feelings which are released in stage four, then further

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 139.

loosening and freedom of organismic flow is increased in stage five as more and more incongruence breaks down and the person grows closer to openly accepting, identifying with and being his own experiencing process.

Feelings are now expressed freely as being in the present and are very close to being fully experienced. As Rogers puts it:

They "bubble up," "seep through," in spite of the fear and distrust which the client feels at experiencing them with fullness and immediacy.

Example: "That kinda came out and I just don't understand it. (Long pause) I'm trying to get hold of what that terror is."

Example: Client is talking about an external event. Suddenly she gets a pained, stricken look. Therapist: "What--what's hitting you now?" Client: "I don't know. (She cries) [...] I must have been getting a little too close to something I didn't want to talk about, or something." Here the feeling has almost seeped through into awareness in spite of her.

Example: "I feel stopped right now. Why is my mind blank right now? I feel as if I'm hanging onto something, and I've been letting go of other things; and something in me is saying, 'What more do I have to give up?'"⁵⁶

It should also be clear from the above cited examples that experiencing the kind of feeling just illustrated involves a direct referent. In each instance, even though adequate conceptualization is not yet available, the person is working with a definite feeling in themselves. It is a feeling which occurs, as we have seen in our outline of the

56 Ibid., p. 140.

experiencing process, in the here-and-now. It can be directly referred to, guides subsequent attempts at conceptualization, is implicitly meaningful to the person (witness the crying and long thoughtful pause in the above cited illustrations), and is a preconceptual organismic process.

Each of the seven stages marks a definite advance in the quality of closeness to experiencing which is going on. By this stage feelings spontaneously bubble through simply because the defensive barriers which have previously hindered such eruption now no longer have the power to hold them back--nor, it might be added, does the person who has grown to this point have as much of a need or desire to prevent the emergence of such feeling.

At this point another important aspect of closeness to one's experiencing develops.

There is an increasing ownership of self feeling, and a desire to be these, to be the "real me."

Example: "The real truth of the matter is that I'm not the sweet, forbearing guy that I try to make out that I am. I get irritated at things. I feel like snapping at people, and I feel like being selfish at times; and I don't know why I should pretend I'm not that way."⁵⁷

This is a clear instance of the greater degree of acceptance of all feelings.

By now, experiencing is so loosened that feelings break through with little postponement and the way in which the person

57 Ibid., p. 141.

construes such experience is much less defensive and filled with fresh discoveries of how many personal constructs are just that and nothing more. They need to be critically evaluated and questioned.

Example: A man says, "This idea of needing to please--of having to do it--that's really been kind of a basic assumption of my life (he weeps quietly). It's kind of, you know, just one of the very unquestioned axioms that I have to please. I have no choice. I just have to." Here he is clear that this assumption has been a construct, and it is evident that its unquestioned status is at an end.⁵⁸

Now the person is much clearer in his differentiation of feeling and meaning--especially insofar as he recognizes that much of the content of experience is not released because of the present situation but because of his re-playing a programmed response that has been ingrained from past experience.

Along with the clearer differentiation, such a person is more able to face up to the reality of contradictions and incongruences in experience and is willing to assume more and more responsibility for undertaking the risks and pain involved in growing through such blockages.

One cannot help but see a certain parallel between the assumption of such responsibility and the commitment to move into the purgative way outlined by Evelyn Underhill in

58 Ibid., p. 142.

her description of development along the Mystic Way. The person has been strengthened in their resolve to discover and open themselves to the Real and this stiffens their commitment to the venture.

Now that the models and programmed manner of perceiving the world and self is out in the open there is a kind of increasing dialogue within the person between the various aspects that have been in disharmony.

Sometimes these dialogues are verbalized.

Example: "Something in me is saying, 'What more do I have to give up? You've taken so much from me already.' This is me talking to me--the me way back in there who talks to the me who runs the show. It's complaining now, saying, 'You're getting too close! Go away!'"

Example: Frequently these dialogues are in the form of listening to oneself, to check cognitive formulations against the direct referent of experiencing. Thus a client says, "Isn't that funny? I never really looked at it that way. I'm just trying to check it. It always seemed to me that the tension was much more externally caused than this--that it wasn't something I used in this way. But it's true--it's really true."⁵⁹

It is interesting that in the process of Gestalt Therapy, once the inner division has been discovered, the client is encouraged to give a voice to each part of himself that is in tension with the other and carry on a dialogue between the two. In the course of this dialogue many feelings are often released and can be explored more fully.

59 Loc. Cit.

The Sixth Stage

Dr. Rogers considers the sixth stage as an extremely crucial one in the process of development along the growth continuum. In a sense, it is quite dramatic and can be characterized as follows:

A feeling which has previously been "stuck," has been inhibited in its process quality, is experienced with immediacy now.

A feeling flows to its full result.

A present feeling is directly experienced with immediacy and richness.

This immediacy of experiencing, and the feeling which constitutes its content, are accepted. This is something which is, not something to be denied, feared, struggled against.⁶⁰

The significant element which bursts through with a good deal of force at this point is what Rogers describes as "... a quality of living subjectively in the experience, not feeling about".⁶¹ Self as object tends to disappear because "the self, at this moment, is the feeling".⁶²

The significance of this stage of development cannot be over-stressed. No longer does the self have feelings as a kind of possession. The person has now entered fully into the process of his own awareness of the field of which he is a part and within which he responds. He is a living expression

60 Ibid., p. 145-146.

61 Ibid., p. 147.

62 Loc. Cit.

of a unified experience of reality. He is not an objective observer of his feeling process. Rather, he accepts, owns and identifies with this process--he is the feeling, the experiencing in the present moment. In a sense he is cut loose from the artificial, structured or introjected self which he has picked up from parents, authority figures, arbitrary social norms, religious traditions, etc. He is, in this moment, identified with the experiencing of his own organism, irrespective of whether it conforms to the previous norms or patterns which regulated his former sense of self.

A significant characteristic which accompanies this contact with the depths of experiencing in the immediate present is the sometimes extraordinary physiological loosening which accompanies it. Moistness in the eyes, tears, sighs, muscular relaxation and a host of other autonomic correlates of personality change are evident.

Individuals who are good "reality testers" discriminate sensitively at an autonomic level between noxious and neutral stimuli. Poor reality testers do not. This suggests a surprising unity between the behavioral and autonomic levels. It appears that it is the organism as a whole which responds, either discriminatingly or the reverse to its environment. (Emphasis ours)⁶³

Our earlier discussion of unitive consciousness and the sense of self as organism-environment is directly pertinent

⁶³ Carl Rogers, "Significant Trends in the Client-Centered Orientation", p. 94.

to the physiological loosening which arises in a person when through a changed relationship with their feeling process they have gotten in touch with their own experiencing. It is almost as though the organism can now let go of the rigid line of defense whereby the process of feeling in any situation was inhibited from rising to the level of conscious awareness because it would be out of phase with the self-picture that had been built up.

All the organismic avenues of reality can now be listened to with greater openness and less defensiveness because the person is moving in the direction of identifying himself with the process of his own experiencing, rather than with a somewhat static construct that is other than or different from this process. He has moved from having experience to being his feeling process. He no longer has a sense of self which must be constantly defended against information coming from the organism which is not congruent with his former fixed, rigid construct of self.

The moment of full experiencing becomes a clear and definite referent to be trusted and listened to as an accurate indicator of the self-in-the-moment. As a person gradually sheds the programmed patterns which inhibited full focused attention and openness to present experience he gradually discovers that the response of the organism is more trustworthy because the data it provides is not mingled with

irrelevant memories and conditioned responses from the past. The importance of stage six is that an irreversible growth pattern is now beginning to be set which lays an organismic basis for greater unitive consciousness through (1) identification of the self with the experiencing process, and (2) less defensiveness toward and greater openness and sensitivity to all avenues of organismic contact and integration with the environment. The greater the degree of congruence, the firmer will be the foundation for unity within the person and the possibility of less defensive, unitive consciousness as he faces the external world.

The Seventh Stage

In those areas in which the sixth stage has been reached, it is no longer so necessary that the client be fully received by the therapist, though this still seems helpful. However, because of the tendency for the sixth stage to be irreversible, the client often seems to go on into the seventh and final stage without much need of the therapist's help. This stage occurs as much outside of the therapeutic relationship as in it, and is often reported, rather than experienced in the therapeutic hour.⁶⁴

At this point the acceptant ownership of feelings and immediacy of experiencing have progressed to the point where the individual can more or less move much more confidently on his own. The blocks to growth together with the defensiveness and lack of congruence which reinforced and

64 Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, p. 151.

helped perpetuate them have been largely dissipated. Experiencing has now lost almost all of its structure-bound aspects and the person no longer needs to refract his feeling process through a grid of preconceived notions about himself. Rather, he is much more open to the different directions which his experiencing process can take and there is much less defensive programming to insure that no surprising or radically different changes might take place.

It is interesting to note that Edward Maupin, in his recent research on meditation presents its fundamental goals in language surprisingly close to Dr. Rogers' descriptions of the final stages of congruence. Using existential psychology, and especially the work of Rollo May as a starting point, Maupin describes the nexus between a fuller experience of being-in-the-world and having a sense of self that is primarily one of process or flow in the present moment.

As we examine the experience of being-in-the-world the relevance of meditation should become more apparent. First of all, I think it would be a mistake to be overawed by reports of this kind of experience--to consider it a rare and very special state to which only mystics can aspire. I have an existence, a presence in the world; and I can watch it as it unfolds. Usually, though, I do not look at it directly, as it is, but only conceptually. I have preconceived notions of what my identity should be, of where I want it to go, of things I would not want to find there. This first major distraction from experiencing my being directly, then, is my concept of my identity--the whole system of vested interests I maintain in being some picture of myself. Usually this is tied up with how I want other people to experience me, with how they might want me to be. Thus my usual experience of myself is as if seen from the outside, through the eyes of other people.

The point is not that thinking about myself in social terms or that conceptualizing in general is wrong; these are useful tools. But I can also learn to experience my being from the inside, as only I can know it. Meditation is an excellent method for learning how to observe and experience what is. Conceptualizing is temporarily dropped, and I observe the flow of my experience with calm detachment. It is as if I say, "I do not know who I am, so I will watch myself unfold, moment by moment." I stay in the here-and-now, the present, instead of thinking about what is not present. This experience of my living, unlike the identity concepts, can never be complete; it is never a neat little conceptual package. Instead, I watch my spontaneity spring out of a source I cannot completely grasp, and flow past like a river, which is never twice the same.⁶⁵

The goal of meditation would certainly seem to parallel the goal of congruence with the experiencing process as an important step toward fuller human functioning. The only

⁶⁵ Edward W. Maupin, "Meditation", in Ways of Growth, Herbert A. Otto and John Mann, eds., New York, The Viking Press, 1968, p. 190-191.

cautionary note that must be sounded is whether or not meditation is in every instance "an excellent method for learning how to observe and experience what is". If the techniques of meditation simply deautomatize perception without really affecting the underlying experiencing process, then the use of such methods would not necessarily bring about the quality of unitive consciousness that contributes to fuller human functioning. The element of fluidity within the experiencing process which characterizes higher stages of congruence is, as we hope to show, not necessarily affected by the unusual shifts in perception associated with deautomatization.

It is interesting that in his description of stage seven, Rogers notes two important elements that appear as an integral part of identifying oneself as a more fluid process. The first is that "Personal constructs are tentatively reformulated, to be validated against further experience, but even then, to be held loosely".⁶⁶

None of us can do without certain constructs that bring a measure of stability into our sense of self. The point, however, is that for the growing person these constructs are never held uncritically and they are always subject to change in the light of new knowledge or experience. The source of stability is not in the rigidly held construct,

66 Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, p. 153.

but in the very growth and self-actualization which leads a person forward in the process of human development. The locus of ultimate trust becomes the growth process itself rather than any of its temporary expressions which may occur along the way.

This leads to the second important element which is stabilized and actively functioning at this stage of growth. It is "... the experiencing of effective choice of new ways of being".⁶⁷ Because so much trusted new knowledge is available in each successive moment, freedom becomes a real possibility. The rigid, defensive person is basically unfree because he must invariably pattern his response and perception in such a way as not to upset the delicate balance he may have fabricated within himself so as not to bring out into open conflict the fundamental incongruence which imprisons him in a stereotyped individual reality. The growing person is free to be acceptingly open to all available data (which is also immeasurably increased by his growing congruence) and to have a much wider range of choice.

Such basic freedom is fundamental for the possibility of genuine unitive consciousness. The freer a person is with regard to the many choices available, the more there is possibility of that kind of openness to what something is in

67 Ibid., p. 154.

itself--a fundamental pre-requisite for heightened unitive consciousness.

Rogers concludes his description of the seventh stage of growth with the following summary:

When the individual has, in his process of change, reached the seventh stage, we find ourselves involved in a new dimension. The client has now incorporated the quality of motion, of flow, of changingness, into every aspect of his psychological life, and this becomes its outstanding characteristic. He lives in his feelings, knowingly and with basic trust in them and acceptance of them. The ways in which he construes experience are continually changing as his personal constructs are modified by each new living event. His experiencing is process in nature, feeling the new in each situation and interpreting it anew, interpreting in terms of the past only to the extent that the now is identical with the past. He experiences with a quality of immediacy, knowing at the same time that he experiences. He values exactness in differentiation of his feelings and of the personal meanings of his experience. His internal communication between various aspects of himself is free and unblocked. He communicates himself freely in relationships with others, and these relationships are not stereotyped, but person to person. He is aware of himself, but not as an object. Rather it is a reflexive awareness, a subjective living in himself in motion. He perceives himself as responsibly related to his problems. Indeed, he feels a fully responsible relationship to his life in all its fluid aspects. He lives fully in himself as a constantly changing flow of process.⁶⁸

68 Ibid., p. 154-155.

Summary

Up to this point in the present chapter we have attempted to outline as briefly and clearly as possible what is involved in the process of becoming a more fully functioning person as such constructive growth and development has been articulated by one of the leading exponents of Humanistic Psychology. We have discussed the process movement of growth in the sense of self from rigidity to integrated fluidity as it appears in the writing of Dr. Carl Rogers and noted similarities with the development of field theory consciousness cited earlier by Lawrence LeShan. We have summarized what Rogers considers to be the necessary and sufficient conditions of constructive personality change and introduced the terms congruence and experiencing. We have indicated how the psychological dynamics which these terms point to are operative in the stage by stage process of human growth as viewed within the client-centered framework.

Our purpose has been to indicate that a significant factor at work in developing perception patterns which contribute to constructive personality change that results in what most people would refer to as more mature, fuller human functioning, is a changed relationship to one's own feeling process. The ability to accept, to own, to get into and

become congruent with the organismic process of experiencing is seen to be a vital factor in reducing the basic defensiveness which keeps the organism and the person divided within and without.

Our goal is to discover some criteria for assessing the quality of unitive consciousness generally associated with primary religious experience. We do this by trying to determine when such consciousness indicates true growth within a person and when, as Evelyn Underhill has indicated, it is merely an interesting extension of sense experience that does not necessarily lead to character transformation.

The kind of organismic readiness characterized by congruence would therefore seem to be a key factor where unitive consciousness would contribute to constructive personality change. We have tried to indicate two possible approaches to achieve unitive consciousness--on the one hand, the artificial inducement of altered states of consciousness through techniques that produce a simple deautomatization of perception, and on the other hand, congruence with a process of feeling or "experiencing" going on within a person.

Before making a direct comparison between these two approaches and drawing a few initial conclusions, we must first penetrate a little deeper into the process of congruence itself as the experiencing process guides a person toward fuller human functioning. This will entail a look at

congruence and experiencing in their relation to unitive consciousness less from the outside (as in Rogers' seven stages) and more from the inside of the process itself.

2. The Experiencing Process and Constructive Personality Change.

The material which follows represents an attempt to outline a creative contribution to the understanding of constructive personality change which has been developed within the Humanistic orientation in psychology as the result of conclusions drawn from extensive observation and practical application. Carl Rogers has continually singled out Dr. Eugene Gendlin as being the one man whose familiarity with and research on the process of experiencing has added immeasurably to the advancement of his own study of congruence.⁶⁹ Gendlin's work, as an extension and elaboration of Dr. Rogers'

⁶⁹ Cf. the number of references to Gendlin's research in Rogers' work On Becoming a Person, as well as numerous articles such as, for example: Carl R. Rogers, "The Interpersonal Relationship: The Core of Guidance", in Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 32, 1962, p. 416-429; Carl R. Rogers, "Significant Trends in the Client-Centered Orientation", in Progress in Clinical Psychology, Lawrence E. Abt and Bernard F. Riess, eds., New York, Grune and Stratton, 1960, p. 85-99. At one point Carl Rogers states quite bluntly that Dr. Gendlin's research and thinking "... constitutes one step in transcending the subject-object dichotomy which plagues our thinking today". Carl R. Rogers, "Toward a Science of the Person", in Anthony Sutich and Miles Vich, Readings in Humanistic Psychology, New York, MacMillan (The Free Press), 1969, p. 43.

material will help provide us with a framework within the Humanistic orientation for laying down some guidelines for determining when unitive religious consciousness contributes to the fuller human functioning of a person.

Carl Rogers has identified what he considers to be the necessary and sufficient conditions for constructive personality change to occur, and in his seven stage outline he provides actual reports of how the changing process feels as a person moves through it. But this account still does not provide an explanation of the dynamics of what is happening. Rogers' explanation is rather like a description of electricity--we know that it works, we can take advantage of the process, and can make extraordinary practical applications. But when pinned down for an explanation of what is actually happening, and not just for a description of the necessary and sufficient conditions under which it can happen, then the mystery which clouds much of our experience of constructive personality change reasserts itself.

The explanation of a simple deautomatization of perception gets into an interpretation of the actual dynamics of what happens in the movement toward unitive awareness, together with a description of the various triggering mechanisms which make the shifts in perception and altered states of consciousness possible. We need the same type of explanation of the process of constructive personality change before

we can then compare it with the process of deautomatization in order to determine whether norms for evaluating various ascetical and contemplative practices for heightening unitive consciousness actually contribute to long-term growth and fuller human functioning.

Without such an explanation we have no real critical vantage point from which to evaluate the process of deautomatization. We have no way of probing deeper to find out whether the unitive consciousness associated with the various techniques and practices which can break perceptual constancies necessarily contributes to constructive personality change. And even if we suspect that it might not in many cases, we still lack an adequate explanation for our suspicions until we can penetrate the dynamics of constructive change in much the same way that we can get at the inner workings of a simple deautomatization of perception.

Gendlin maintains that two current formulations of personality actually make change appear to be theoretically impossible. He calls these two impossibilities "the repression paradigm", and the "content paradigm".

Most personality theories (in different words and with somewhat different meanings) share what I call the "repression paradigm." They agree that in an individual's early family relations he introjected certain values, according to which he was loved only if he felt and behaved in certain ways. Experiences which contradicted these demands on him came to be "repressed" (Freud), or "denied to awareness" (Rogers), or "not me" (Sullivan). Later, when the individual encounters experiences of this contradicting sort, he must either distort them or remain totally unaware of them. For, were he to notice the contradictory experience, he would become intolerably anxious. The ego (Freud), or self-concept (Rogers), or self-dynamism (Sullivan), thus basically influences awareness and perception. This influence is termed "resistance" (Freud), or "defensiveness" (Rogers), or "security operation" (Sullivan), and a great deal of behavior is thereby explainable. A personality is as it is, and remains as it is, because it cannot take account of these experiences. Or if, somehow, repression is forcefully lifted and the individual is made to become aware of these experiences, the ego will "lose control," the self will "disintegrate," and intolerable "uncanny emotions" will occur. In psychosis, it is said, the individual is aware of such experiences and the ego or self-organization has indeed broken down.⁷⁰

Having summarized the repression paradigm, Gendlin then goes on to give his basic criticism of it as any sort of an adequate explanation of personality change.

Once we formulate theory along the lines of the repression paradigm, we cannot then blithely turn around and "explain" personality change as a "becoming aware" of the previously repressed. Once we have shown how anything will be distorted which tends to bring these experiences to awareness, we cannot then consider it an explanation to simply assert that personality change is (by definition supposedly impossible) a becoming aware. Change happens. But, to say that is not to offer an explanation--it is only to state the problem [...] To account for personality change, we will have to account for how this crucial becoming aware really does occur...⁷¹

⁷⁰ Eugene T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change", in New Directions in Client-Centered Therapy, J. T. Hart and T. M. Tomlinson, Eds., Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1970, p. 131-132.

When describing the experience of being fully received, Carl Rogers puts his finger on a crucial condition for the process of becoming aware to take place. But once again, it is only a condition and not an explanation of the underlying dynamic. We need a further explanation of the actual process of congruence from the inside.

The second formulation of personality which Gendlin feels is inadequate to explain change is what he terms the "content paradigm".

The second basic aspect of personality change (and the second way in which current modes of formulating make change theoretically impossible) concerns the view of personality as made up of various "contents." By "contents" I mean any defined entities, whether they are called "experiences," "factors," "S-R bonds," "needs," "drives," "motives," "appraisals," "traits," "self-concepts," "anxieties," "motivational systems," "infantile fixations," "developmental failures," or whatever.

If we are to understand personality change, we must understand how these personality constituents can change in nature.

To account for this change in the nature of contents, we need a type of definition (explanatory constructs) which also can change. We cannot explain change in the nature of the content when our theory specifically defines personality only as content. Such theory can formulate what needs to be changed, and later it can also formulate what has changed, and into what it has changed; but it will remain theoretically unexplained how such change is possible, so long as all our explanations are in terms of concepts of this or that defined content [...] Our conclusion here is not simply that defined contents of personality do not exist. Rather, it is that if we define personality as contents and in no further, more basic way, then we cannot expect to use the same concepts to explain just how these contents change.⁷²

⁷² Ibid., p. 133.

Gendlin cites the following example to illustrate his criticism of a content approach to the explanation of constructive personality change.

... during psychotherapy the patient finally comes to realize these essential contents (they will be conceptualized in whatever the vocabulary of the particular theory the psychotherapist uses). He realizes now that he has been full of "hostility," or that he has felt and acted from "partial, fixated sexual desires," or that he "hates his father," or that he is "passive-dependent," or was "never loved as a child." "Now what?" he asks. How do you change such contents? No way is given. The fact that these contents actually do change is our good fortune. The theories explain the personality in terms of these defined contents, these "experiences," or "needs," or "lacks." The theories cannot explain how these contents melt and lose their character to become something of a different character. Yet they do.⁷³

But if the repression and content paradigms are inadequate in themselves to explain the dynamics of transformation, Gendlin notes that two near universal observations of constructive personality change can be made regardless of the particular therapeutic orientation which is followed.

- (1) Major personality change involves some sort of intense affective or feeling process occurring in the individual.
- (2) Major personality change occurs nearly always in the context of an ongoing personal relationship.⁷⁴

Knowing or intellectualizing is not the process of changing.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 134.

⁷⁴ Loc. Cit.

Furthermore, it can be shown from observation that when an individual thinks about his emotions and experiences in solitude, there is frequently little change. Yet, when he does it with another, these changes do occur. Thus, the manner of experiencing must be quite different within the context of a relationship, and there are subtle elements at work here which need to be identified in order to determine how they contribute positively to the process of change.

Gendlin summarizes as follows:

Our two observations and our two problems are related: simply, we may say that, while it is theoretically impossible for the individual to become aware of what he must repress and to change his personality contents into other contents, we observe that both occur when the individual is engaged in a deep and intense feeling process and in the context of a personal relationship. We need a theoretical account of this observed possibility, and we need to reformulate the theory of repression and the definitions of personality constituents, so that observed changes can be theoretically formulated.⁷⁵

Let us now consider the implications of these important observations and problems as they affect our understanding of the process of experiencing and movement toward greater congruence.

75 Ibid., p. 137.

a) Implicit Experiencing within the Feeling Process

In our earlier introductory description of the process of experiencing with which the maturing and fully functioning person is congruent, we noted that besides being a preconceptual process of feeling in the here and now that is a direct referent and guides conceptualization, such experience was also implicitly meaningful. The movement toward greater congruence in a person involved the on-going explicitizing of such meanings as they were brought to greater awareness, accepted and finally trusted as being an accurate guide for decision and action. The term implicit is important, however and needs further clarification.

When felt meanings occur in interaction with verbal symbols and we feel what the symbols mean, we term such meanings "explicit" or "explicitly known." On the other hand, quite often we have just such felt meanings without a verbal symbolization. Instead we have an event, a perception, or some word such as the word "this" (which represents nothing, but only points). When this is the case, we can term the meaning "implicit" or "implicitly felt, but not explicitly known."

Please note that "explicit" and "implicit" meanings are both in awareness. What we concretely feel and can inwardly refer to is certainly "in awareness" [...] "Implicit" meaning is often confusingly discussed as if it were "unconscious" or "not in awareness." It should be quite clear that, since the direct referent is felt and is a direct datum of attention, it is "in awareness." Anything termed "implicit" is felt in awareness.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 139.

Implicit meaning must not be misunderstood as standing for an already explicitized meaning that is somehow hidden in some dark recess of the organism--waiting to be liberated as it were. Rather,

Implicit meanings are incomplete. Symbolic completion--or carrying forward--is a bodily felt process. There is an interacting, not an equation, between implicit meaning and symbols.⁷⁷

In other words, implicit meaning is not a kind of hidden content, a thing that somehow pops out into the open when the right word that accurately corresponds to it is spoken. Rather, implicit meaning is one aspect of a process that waits to be completed.

Implicit bodily feeling is preconceptual. Only when interaction with verbal symbols (or events) actually occurs, is the process actually carried forward and the explicit meaning formed. So long as it is implicit, it is incomplete, awaiting symbols (or events) with which it can interact in a preorganized way.

Thus, to explicate is to carry forward a bodily felt process. Implicit meanings are incomplete. They are not hidden conceptual units.⁷⁸

It can easily be seen from the above that Gendlin is moving toward a conceptualization of personality change in terms of the problems posed by an incompleting process rather than hidden or repressed contents that need to be brought to the surface and revealed. The function of the response is not necessarily to reveal contents but to unblock a stopped

77 Ibid., p. 140.

78 Ibid., p. 141.

process. Gendlin speaks of this as "process unity" and formulates a field theory approach to personality change as follows:

There is a single process which involves all of the following: environmental interaction, body life, feeling, cognitive meanings, interpersonal relations, and self. The concretely occurring process is one, although we can isolate and emphasize these various aspects of it. Our "thing language" tends to present whatever we discuss as if it were a separable object in space. In this way we artificially separate environment, body, feeling, meanings, other people, and self. When they are discussed as separable things, their obvious interrelations become puzzling: How can feelings be involved in (psychosomatic) body illnesses? How can cognitive thought be influenced by felt needs? How is it that expressing ourselves interpersonally results in changes in the self? At every juncture the "separate thing" view of these phenomena builds these puzzles into our discussions. Instead we can employ a frame of reference which considers the one process which concretely occurs. I want to give the name process unity to the way in which the one concrete process is basic to these various aspects.⁷⁹

The organism-environment or field theory approach is here clearly applied. There is a field of activity or a process under consideration rather than a collection of discrete entities with distinct boundaries and cut-off points. The conceptualization of personality is in terms of a blocked or on-going process rather than as a distinct entity or thing that has clear-cut lines marking it off from other entities.

79 Ibid., p. 159-160.

It is crucial to realize the important shift in perception which influences such a conceptualization. The focus of attention is no longer on specified hidden contents that can be individually dug out through various techniques, and onto what Rogers has described as the quality of movement. The sensitive therapist with this orientation tries to get close to the quality of flow which the person is at this particular moment, rather than primarily valuing the next revelation of hidden content that surfaces.

Such revelations are obviously important. Not so much as valuable pieces of information in themselves, but rather as indicators of the increasing degree of flow that is taking place and that the client is becoming. In one sense, the specific content of the revelation is almost peripheral to the more profound vehicle of personality change which is movement into actively being the process of feeling which underlies and is released in the revelation.

We might add, at this point, that we are now in a better position to begin making some important qualifications about the wider self that William James spoke of as being at the heart of religious experience and unitive consciousness. Perhaps this sense of a wider self is not best explained in terms of quantitatively adding hidden contents from the unconscious or other sources to the storehouse of active awareness. It might be better conceptualized as an experience of

greater or more completed flow, being in and identified with the process of feeling which actively ties us in to the more extensive field of which we are a part and an expression. The models which James had available to him at the time he wrote were limited even though he may have been correct in the identification of certain experiences as the underlying vehicle of religious awareness. A wider self is a quantitative phrase that perhaps fit well with the models of personality prevalent in his time.

Once we realize, however, that implicit meanings are incomplete aspects of a felt process, and that it is the freeing and completion of this process which is at the heart of constructive growth and fuller human functioning, then it is perhaps better to view the wider self as the self of integrated fluidity. This latter designation also implies less divisiveness within the person and greater availability of more organismic information regarding the way in which the individual is tied into and expresses the field of which he is himself an organic part. The feeling of widening would then result from the unblocking and completion of a process rather than from the quantitative addition of some heretofore hidden content.

But how does change take place in an individual? How is the feeling process unblocked? How are implicit meanings carried forward to a kind of completion that moves a person

constructively ahead toward fuller human functioning? According to Dr. Gendlin, this is achieved through a process known as focusing.

b) "Focusing"

"Focusing", in Gendlin's words "... is the whole process which ensues when the individual attends to the direct referent of experiencing".⁸⁰ It is quite different from the focusing used to achieve the altered states of consciousness associated with a simple deautomatization of perception. Ludwig's categories for the production of such unusual perceptions involve much focusing of attention--principally upon objects outside the person or on certain physiological functions such as one's own breathing.

However, when the direct referent of experiencing is focused on, a somewhat different process is involved. Attention is centered not on an object, whether external or internal (such as breathing or heartbeat), but on the organismic process flow of feeling and its implicit meaning that characterizes the person in his relationship at any given moment.

It is, of course, true that in early stages of growth (for example, in therapy), the rigidly structured person will

80 Ibid., p. 141.

tend to avoid direct focusing on experience and perhaps only gradually or obliquely move in this direction. He may tentatively begin by dealing with his experiencing as an un-owned object. However, the experience of being fully received, communicated in the unconditional positive regard and empathic understanding of the therapist, gradually creates a climate within which it becomes increasingly possible for the client to risk focusing on and becoming more congruent with his own experiencing process as a direct referent which is accepted as his own.

A developmental process then seems to occur in the quality of focusing when the necessary and sufficient conditions that support such growth in awareness can take place. Gendlin describes this process as occurring in four general phases, although they are by no means necessarily distinct.

In the first phase there is direct reference to the experiencing process, but with the ability to conceptualize only rough aspects of it. However, even though such early attempts at conceptualization are vague, to the extent that they are successful they have an immediate impact on the degree of anxiety present within the person.

A very important and surprising fact about direct reference to felt meanings is that if the matter under consideration is anxiety producing or highly uncomfortable, this felt discomfort decreases as the individual directly refers to the felt meaning. One would have expected the opposite [...] As the individual symbolizes some aspects of the felt meaning, he senses its rightness partly by the degree of easing of the anxiety which he feels.

In contrast to the anxiety or discomfort, the felt meaning itself becomes sharper, more distinctly felt, as he refers to and correctly symbolized what it is. In fact, his sense of whether or not he has "correctly" symbolized is partly just this sense of increased intensity of the felt meaning.

This decreased anxiety is a very surprising fact, much against the general assumptions about anxiety-provoking material. We generally assume that to focus directly on the experiencing makes us more anxious. My observations indicate that [...] the more we focus directly upon the felt meaning, and the more of it we symbolize correctly, the more relief we feel.⁸¹

The tension relief which follows accurate symbolization of the implicit meanings contained in experiencing suffuses the organism to such an extent that it can be directly observed through the use of such autonomic correlates as measurement of skin resistance, skin temperature and heart rate.⁸² The organism's defensiveness relaxes as symbolization begins to carry forward incomplete meanings and the bodily process associated with such completion.

81 Ibid., p. 143.

82 Cf. E. T. Gendlin and J. I. Berlin, "Galvanic Skin Response Correlates of Different Modes of Experiencing", in Journal of Clinical Psychology, Vol. 17, No. 1, Jan. 1961, p. 73-77.

The second phase of focusing involves a noticeable opening up and accelerated unfolding as the person gets further into the implicit meaning of his experiencing. Surprisingly enough, this forward movement takes place in spite of the seemingly insoluble nature of personal problems which may become evident with each advancing step.

... even when the solution seems further away than ever, still the physiological tension reduction occurs, and a genuine change takes place. I believe that this change is really more basic than the resolution of specific problems [...] For, when a direct referent of experiencing "opens up," much more change has occurred than the cognitive realization of this or that. This is most dramatically evident when, after the "unfolding," the individual still sees no way out. He says, "At least I know what it is now, but how will I ever change it or deal with it?" Yet, during the following days and in the next therapy hour, it turns out that he is already different, that the quality of the problem has changed and his behavior has been different. And as for a good explanation of all this resolution [...] "well, it just seems all right now." There is a global change in the whole manner of experiencing in this regard.⁸³

The unfolding, then, does more than simply inform a person about what is going on in a kind of cognitive or intellectual manner. Rather, the entire manner of experiencing is affected and, as Gendlin notes, this is ultimately more important for growth and fuller functioning than the solution to any specific problem.

⁸³ Eugene T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change", p. 145.

In the third phase of focusing there is a good deal of wide application in a kind of global manner. A person may sit silent for long periods of time during this phase as he is flooded with different associations, memories and situations which are in some way directly tied to the direct referent in experiencing with which he is working.

Many might want to characterize this as a deepening of insight, but Gendlin feels that it is really much more than this.

I realize that some of the foregoing observations have been termed by others as "insight." I believe that is a misnomer. First, the global application is in no way a figuring out, nor is it chiefly a better understanding. Rather, insight and better understanding are the results, the by-products, of this process, as a few of its very many changed aspects call attention to themselves. One can be sure that for every relation or application the individual here explicitly thinks, there are thousands which he does not think of, but which have, nevertheless, just changed. Not his thinking about the difference which the unfolding has made, but the unfolding itself, changes him in all these thousands of respects. The change occurs whether or not he thinks of any such applications, and whether or not he considers the unfolding to be a resolving. For, as I emphasized, he may well walk out saying, "I have no idea what I can do with this, or how I change it." But, it has already changed, and the great multiplicity of respects in which "it" implicitly functions have all changed.⁸⁴

The final, and perhaps most important phase of focusing is what Gendlin refers to as referent movement. Once the initial direct reference to experiencing has taken place

84 Ibid., p. 147.

(encouraged by the support of being fully received), and the speed-up of unfolding and global applications has occurred and subsided, a person then discovers that the original felt referent of experiencing now somehow feels different. It has become a new direct referent and the four-fold process of focusing can begin once again.

The individual distinctly feels a change in the quality of the felt referent. It is not only a change but a directly experienced "give" or "movement" which feels right and welcome. Its tremendous importance lies in the fact that after such a referent movement (even very small), the implicit meanings are now different. The "scenery," as it were, which one confronts, changes.⁸⁵

We have all experienced this kind of referent movement to some degree or other in our own lives. At times, even though we may have been unable to change circumstances or situations over which we may have been unduly concerned, nonetheless, after a time we may have noticed a definite change in the way we felt about them. We may have described it to ourselves as a being more acceptant, less threatened, or simply: "somehow I have changed and the whole thing seems different now--It's O.K." There has been a referent movement, "... a change in the felt meaning which functions in symbolizing".⁸⁶ The movement of congruence with experiencing

85 Ibid., p. 148.

86 Loc. Cit.

involves an on-going transformation of the experiencing process itself. Accurate symbolization opens up the possibility of referent movement as implicit meanings are completed thereby freeing the organism for further forward movement.

Both Gendlin and Rogers note that once this movement is set in motion it tends to continue and develop in a very definite direction as the person works deeper into areas of blockage.

As the individual engages in focusing, and as referent movement occurs, there is a very strong impelling force exerted by the direct referent just then felt. The individual may "get off the track," "talk about something else," or put up with considerable distracting comments and useless deductions by his listener; and still the given felt, direct referent remains strikingly as the "next thing" with which he must deal.

If the listener's responsiveness makes it possible, the individual finds himself moving from one referent movement and unfolding to another and another. Each time the inward scene changes, new felt meanings are there for him. The cycles of the four phases set into motion an overall feeling process. This feeling process has a very striking, concretely felt, self-propelled quality [...] This self-propelled feeling process is the essential motor of personality change. (Emphasis ours)⁸⁷

In our study of primary religious experience that actually contributes to the fuller human functioning of a person, we must recognize the importance of the dynamics involved in this "self-propelled feeling process". If it is not somehow operative, and itself the source of transformations

87 Ibid., p. 151-152.

in perception that well forth from the referent movement arising out of greater congruence with the experiencing process, then there is always the problematic possibility that unusual unitive perception shifts are simply the result of tampering with the mechanics of perception through simple deautomatization rather than an outcome of genuine growth.

It is the movement involved in the development of this feeling process that is so carefully watched and encouraged by Dr. Rogers. It is instructive to listen to some of his taped interviews with clients. Frequently enough, from the point of view of verbal content alone, the client's responses are illogical and rambling. There are sudden jumps or breaks in content as the client leap-frogs all over the lot, as it were. And yet, if we are listening to a successful interview, and can pick up the feeling movement taking place during this particular therapy hour, we notice a sometimes incredible consistency and development taking place. The content of conversation merely serves as a convenient vehicle for symbolizing various aspects of the experiencing process. Whether the content is logically consistent or presented in an orderly manner is beside the point since, as Gendlin noted, "the self-propelled feeling process is the essential motor of personality change".

In order to permit the feeling process to arise, we must sometimes remain silent, at least for some brief periods. If either he or I talk all the time, little direct reference can take place. Therefore, when he has stopped talking and I have stopped responding, I am glad if there is a little silence in which he can feel the meaning of what we have been saying. I am especially glad if the next thing he then says follows not simply and logically from what we have said, but shows that he has been immersed in something felt. In this way I can notice that a felt referent has provided the transition from what he did say to what he now says. This "descent" into himself, and the overall feeling process which arises, give verbalization to the underlying flow of events of personality change.⁸⁸

The process of focusing, then, helps along the kind of openness to experiencing and accurate symbolization which produces referent movement and constructive personality change through transformation in the feeling process. It is an important aspect of the increase in congruence which comes with fuller human functioning.

Before turning our attention to the role which the personal relationship plays in the process of constructive growth, let us briefly examine an important distinction between emotion and the feeling process--especially insofar as it is directly relevant for our study of primary religious experience.

88 Loc. Cit.

c) Emotions vs the Experiencing Process--The
Question of Religious Revivalism

Since the direct referent in an experiencing process is somehow felt, it has often been confused with emotions. This is an over-simplification, however, which became evident as the client-centered orientation acquired increased sophistication and a clearer grasp of the principles which guided its unique approach. In the beginning

... the "feeling" to which (the Therapist) responds was thought to be an emotion, like anger, or gladness, or fear. While such terms are often used, mostly "the feeling" isn't really an emotion. Rather, it is like "feeling worried that such-and-such would happen, and wishing it wouldn't because [...]" In other words, feelings are always already processes of interaction, of living-in situations, of struggling but not quite succeeding in living situations well or fully.

Thus client-centered therapy has had to be reformulated. Feelings are really "felt meanings," implicitly complex experiencings of situations, of processes that are stopped, or constricted. Responsivity by a therapist, point by point, moment by moment, to the individuals' concrete, bodily felt meaning "carries forward" the process, i.e. allows present experiencing to move beyond hang-ups.⁸⁹

The feeling process, therefore, is the all important issue, not the particular emotions which may arise throughout its development. In fact, the emotions are actually something quite different from the experiencing or feeling process.

⁸⁹ Eugene T. Gendlin, "A Short Summary and Some Long Predictions", in New Directions in Client-Centered Therapy, J. T. Hart and T. M. Tomlinson, Eds., p. 546.

The emotions of guilt, shame, embarrassment, or feeling that I am "bad" are about me or this aspect of my experience and its meaning to me. These emotions as such are not a direct reference to the felt experiencing. I must, at least momentarily, get by these emotions about it (or about myself) in order to refer directly to what all this means to me, why and what makes me feel ashamed. For example, I must say to myself: "All right, yes I am very ashamed; but for a minute now, although it makes me feel very ashamed, I want to sense what this is in me."⁹⁰

The emotion is, in a sense, one step removed from the implicit meanings that are responsible for them. To stop with the emotion is to by-pass the central issue of growth and further development.

It seems quite striking and universal that we feel guilt, shame, and badness, instead of feeling that concerning which we feel shame, guilt, and badness. It is almost as if these emotions themselves preclude our feeling what it all is to us--not so much because they are so unpleasant, as because they skip the point at which we might complete, symbolize, respond or attend to that which centrally we feel. I am inclined to hypothesize that guilt, shame, and badness are emotions which occur as responses instead of the response which, by action or symbolizing, we would otherwise give our felt referent. These emotions seem to complete but actually "skip" the incomplete implicit meanings. It is like an animal whose response to hunger is to bite itself in the leg. Instead of responding with a behavior which in some way "symbolizes" the hunger and carries forward the organismic digestion process, such an animal would be most aware of the pain in its leg and would behave accordingly. At any rate, the preoccupation with these emotions is not to be confused with the felt meaning which, though connected to these emotions, needs the focusing.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Eugene T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change", p. 149.

⁹¹ Loc. Cit.

But even though the emotion is not itself the incomplete, implicit meaning, it is essentially connected with it and cannot be avoided or bypassed in any attempt at growth. The problem, however, is to constructively work with such an emotion so that the underlying meaning can be gotten at and carried forward. In an interesting example, Gendlin points out that focusing involves contact with the emotions but in a way that brings about referent movement and does not simply leave a person wallowing or trapped in a particular emotion--endlessly going around in the same circle and re-playing the same feeling pattern.

One client describes it in terms of a hurricane: "If you only go so far into something, it's like going into a hurricane and getting terribly blown around. You have to go into it and then keep going further and further in till you get to the eye of the hurricane. There it's quiet and you can see where you are." This beautifully expresses the fact that the direction of focusing is definitely into the emotions, not away from them, yet also that focusing involves something qualitatively very different than merely "being blown around" by the emotions. The illustration also captures something of the centrality, depth, and quiet which one finds--the quality which others have called "being in touch with myself." The felt referent, for the moment, is "me." It unfolds and is a thousand things. In comparison, the emotional tone which attaches to it and precedes it is not itself a thousand things. To remain with it merely feeds it. There is always a "breathheld," tense, tight quality about most of these emotional tones. Yet to turn away from the emotion is to turn away also from the direction in which one "finds oneself." Thus, one must "move into" and "through," or "on by," these emotional tones to the direct referent which is the felt meaning of it all.⁹²

92 Ibid., p. 150.

It may well be that hidden within this distinction between emotion and forward movement of the experiencing process lies a significant criterion for evaluating the role of revivalism and emotionalism in religion. A problem that has invariably faced the serious investigator in this area is the need for a more accurate understanding of why the intense emotional experience associated with revivalism so often has little long term effect on the fundamental growth pattern of persons who undergo such experiences.

A partial explanation may lie in the fact that an intense emotional experience does not of itself contribute to forward movement in the experiencing process. Unless the liberation and feeling of being saved which grounds the mature conversion experience grows out of greater congruence and referent movement in experiencing, then the emotion is rootless or dead-ended. It is employed, perhaps unconsciously, as a substitute for what it is meant to represent--namely, growth in the organismically rooted capacity for a greater sense of self in union. The emotion may be sustained or renewed by a continuance of revivalistic experiences. However, since the unitive consciousness which it is intended to represent has no established foundation within the organism, it does not represent the real state of the person. Such an emotion would not contribute to fuller human functioning unless there was corresponding development in the manner of

experiencing. However, since, in most instances, the stress of revivalistic religion is on the emotional aspect, and this is what is valued and sought, there is often little possibility for the more constructive element of referent movement to come into play. Moreover, since the emotional experience is highly prized by the subject, there is usually little inclination to move beyond it. But, in Gendlin's words, "to remain with it merely feeds it".

In revivalistic religion a suitable experience of liberation and being saved is often sustained through various exercises in such a way that the feeling is continually reinforced. However, with all the focus and valuing placed on the emotion itself, there is little likelihood that growth toward fuller human functioning can take place--at least as a direct result of this kind of religious practice. There is, however, need for further research in this area which we will outline in the next chapter.

Having discussed focusing and the distinction between emotion and the experiencing process, let us now turn our attention to consideration of the blocked manner of experiencing and the role of a personal relationship in once again initiating the process of integrated fluidity within a person.

d) The Personal Relationship and a Structure-Bound
Manner of Experiencing

The more rigidly structured and less congruent person usually has a defensive system of tight control, automatizations, set categories and ways of responding to himself and the external world. In most instances, as we have already seen, such an individual does not really experience genuine contact with here-and-now reality. Rather, it is the repetitive, stale content of his own categories and rigidly structured feeling patterns which constitute nearly all of his experience.

... the structured feeling pattern consists of only a few emotions and meanings [...] In such instances psychologists are inclined to notice chiefly the content of the stale pattern. We say "This is a protesting reaction against authority," or "this is a need to dominate," or a "partial" infantile sex drive such as "voyeurism," or "exhibitionism," or a "passive-aggressive need." We tend to neglect the fact that such feeling patterns are also different in manner from an immediate, present, and richly detailed experiencing. It is not only that I react poorly to authority. Rather, I react this way to every person whom I perceive as an authority. And, more important, I react only to his being an authority, not to him as a person, and the very many present facets of him and our situation which are different from any other situation. The "authority pattern," or any similar pattern is really only a bare outline. My experiencing is structure-bound in manner...⁹³

As we have already seen, such a person does not experience the world as it is, but rather his own model or

93 Ibid., p. 153.

category of it. And his limited contacts with the present merely serve as cues to tick off the repetitious patterns that form the static, programmed, blocked response of such an individual.

Gendlin refers to such repetitive patterns as frozen wholes. By this he means that implicit experiencing does not function or interact with present details. The structured or frozen whole is not modified or carried forward by interaction with the present. So, it remains essentially the same, simply repeating itself in different situations like a record played over and over again. It is not changed.

Gendlin describes the structure bound aspect of experiencing in a way that parallels Ornstein's description of the effects of automatization on perception. However, Gendlin attempts to pinpoint and identify the actual dynamics of what happens when the experiencing process is curtailed and how such blockage occurs.

Experiencing is always in process and always functions implicitly. The respects in which it is structure bound are not experiencing. The conceptual content in an abstract way can appear to be the same with different manners of experiencing. However, in the structure-bound manner the experiencing process is, in given respects, missing. By "missing" we mean that from an external viewpoint we may notice that the implicit functioning of experiencing ought to be there, but there is only the process-skipping structure, and the experiencing surrounding it and leading up to it. Thus we say that structure-bound aspects are not in process.⁹⁴

The "process-skipping structure" (or automatization) functions in place of a more congruent kind of awareness in which there is an interaction between the process of feeling and full-focused attention on it with attempts at symbolization that can move the feeling (or felt referent) forward. If this is born in mind, then the role of the personal relationship and its influence on the feeling process becomes more clear.

94 Ibid., p. 154-155.

Experiencing is essentially an interaction between feeling and "symbols" (attention, words, events), just as body life is an interaction between body and environment. In its basic nature, the physical life process is interaction [...]. If we formulate the theory of experiencing in this way, we can formulate why the other person's responses so basically affect the individual's manner of experiencing. For, if there is a response, there will be an ongoing interaction process. Certain aspects of the personality will be in process. However, without the response, there will not (in these respects) be a process at all.

Subjectively, phenomenologically, people describe this as "coming alive inside," or as "feeling many more facets" of oneself. Responses can reconstitute the experiencing process in respects in which, before the response, there was no process (no interaction between feeling and something else and hence no ongoing interaction process).⁹⁵

If we recall the six necessary and sufficient conditions for constructive personality change and growth outlined by Carl Rogers, we note that the therapist, as a congruent person, successfully communicates his congruence with and acceptance of the client's feeling process as it emerges in the here-and-now of the therapy session. The interaction encourages, or to use Gendlin's term reconstitutes the carrying forward of the process of experiencing. In other words, the client is enabled to begin shifting from being fixity toward becoming integrated fluidity.

The response does not simply bring "hidden contents" to the surface. Rather, it reconstitutes a process way of being. To put this another way, the interpersonal response

95 Ibid., p. 155.

can open up the organism-environment experiencing channels, re-establish a field theory mode of perception, break down the division within and without.

Even though the reconstituting obviously does not touch every aspect of an individual's various blockages, nonetheless, once it begins in one area, it tends, if successful and encouraged, to move to other areas. It is precisely this tendency toward further growth, this movement toward greater openness and congruence with the experiencing process that Dr. Rogers has come to prize and trust in his clients. If he can get them into this flow, and encourage them to stay with the unfolding that takes place by communicating the experience of being fully received as the person risks going beyond his static patterns of perception and behavior, then, the client will gradually begin once again to grow on his own. He will assume responsibility for making the growth choice in each present situation as it appears. It is Dr. Rogers' experience that he can trust that this process of growth will tend to perpetuate itself and spread through all blocked areas in a person's life that has led Dr. Gendlin to formulate the following law of the reconstitution of experiencing process:

When certain implicitly functioning aspects of experiencing are carried forward by symbols or events, the resulting experiencing always involves other sometimes newly reconstituted aspects which thereby come to be in process and function implicitly in that experiencing.⁹⁶

It has been found through experience that the personal response from another is one of the most effective means for reconstituting a blocked experiencing process. As noted earlier, when a person is alone and largely incongruent or unable to be aware of and accurately symbolize his own experiencing, then he simply intellectualizes or talks at himself without there being any significant change in his manner of experiencing. The structure-bound or process-skipping aspects of experiencing remain the same.

Only the fundamentally congruent person is able to carry forward his own feeling process without supportive help from another. This statement has enormous implications for our evaluation of the contribution which various forms of asceticism and contemplative meditation can make to fuller human functioning.

In a moment, we shall be quite critical of the process of deautomatization as a path to unitive consciousness and fuller human functioning (especially for the less congruent person) because the forward movement of the experiencing

96 Ibid., p. 156.

process does not appear to be a necessary or essential ingredient of what is interpreted as a breakdown in various automatizations. However, the question remains open as to the possible contribution which the techniques of deautomatization might make to heightened unitive awareness within the essentially congruent individual. To the extent that such a person already possesses a well-developed capacity to respond to and carry forward his own feeling process, the so-called technique of deautomatization might be of some benefit. However, I would have to honestly acknowledge that at this point in my research I feel that such a contribution would be quite minimal. But, since the possibility is there, it must not be overlooked and, as I point out in the final listing of future research projects, it constitutes a definite and extremely worthwhile area of future research.

Gendlin discusses the ability to respond or not to respond to one's own experiencing process as follows:

To the extent that experiencing does implicitly function, the individual may respond to himself and may carry forward his own experiencing [...] To the extent that experiencing does not implicitly function, the individual cannot respond to himself and carry forward his experiencing. In whatever respects it does not function (is structure bound), responses are needed first to reconstitute the interaction process of experiencing in these respects.

Why is it that the individual himself does not carry forward his already implicitly functioning experiencing in ways which would newly reconstitute structure-bound aspects of it? Of course, he cannot respond to the structure-bound aspects, as such (they are not implicitly functioning), but neither can the psychotherapist. The psychotherapeutic response can be defined as one which responds to aspects of experiencing which are implicitly functioning, but to which the individual himself tends not to respond. More precisely, his own response is a whole frozen structure which does not carry forward the felt experiencing process in these respects.⁹⁷

Implicit functioning means that the four-fold process of focusing can take place. The implicit but incomplete meanings within a person's organismic experiencing process are able to be in contact with relationships and situations in the here and now so that they can be carried forward with resulting explicitization and greater congruence.

A structure-bound manner of experiencing means that there is little or no focusing as well as the presence of what Gendlin refers to as a process skipping structure. This is some form of defensive automatization which effectively blocks any forward movement of implicit meaning. Hence, it remains incomplete. In any situation or relationship which

97 Ibid., p. 157.

we might expect to move the incompleting experiencing process forward, what actually happens is that the process skipping structure or defensive reaction automatically goes into operation.

Gendlin describes the felt functioning to which we can respond ourselves as self-process. With this hyphenated phrase (which is really a substitute for the single word self) Gendlin indicates that his conceptualization of the self is not in terms of various clearly defined contents which can be labeled and identified as an entity that we point to as the self. Rather, whatever the self is, it is a movement, an interaction, a process. When the forward movement of experiencing does not take place the self-process is incomplete or stopped. There then exists a quality of consciousness, but it is rigidly structured according to past experience and programmed patterns. The self is structure-bound and there is little or no freshness of perception or real contact with the present. Rather, as noted earlier, the individual perceives and responds to his own categories and models of reality rather than to what is actually presented to him.

When the feeling process is being carried forward through congruence and accurate symbolization of it there exists self-process. However,

... to the extent to which we respond to our own feeling so as to skip or stop the process rather than carry it forward, to that extent we need others to help us be ourselves. Not only the genesis, but the adult development of the self also may require interpersonal responses. Such responses are required not because of their appraisal or content, but because we need them concretely to reconstitute the feeling process. If in certain respects the process is not ongoing when we are alone, it does not help to recite to ourselves some content or happy appraisal which we may remember from a person with whom we felt "more ourselves"; that person's effect on us was brought about not by his appraisal or evaluation, which we can recite to ourselves. Rather, the effect occurred through his responses to our concrete feeling process and, in some respects, reconstituted it and carried it forward. If we can do that alone, we are independent selves in that respect. (Emphasis ours)⁹⁸

The interpersonal relationship, therefore, is an aid to growth not because of the particular content of what is communicated, but because the stopped feeling process is once again started by the quality of the relationship. Gradual increase in congruence and the experience of being fully received are integral parts of the breakdown of structure-bound elements that hinder movement back into being that integrated flow about which Dr. Rogers has spoken.

Summary

Let us now try to sort out the important points made in our discussion of the experiencing process and constructive

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 160.

personality change. The over-all purpose of this section has been to highlight in summary fashion the actual inner dynamics of constructive forward movement within the process of feeling which Carl Rogers believes to be so essential to the development of a congruent person. The movement away from fixity and rigid patterns of response toward integrated fluidity and self-process depends upon the degree of success achieved in contacting, accepting, integrating, and moving forward that feeling process which is ultimately responsible for a heightened sense of unity within oneself and with one's environment.

In one sense, a fundamental challenge of the mystic way, the therapeutic process and any healthy, human life, is the same--how to continually break an individual out of rigid, stale, restricting patterns of response that inhibit movement toward a quality of consciousness and openness to reality that results in fuller human functioning. The very character transformation sought by the mystic and the dispelling of the world of illusion is a mark of this humanizing quest.

What has perhaps not been sufficiently clear is that the essential blockage to the development of a sense of self as organism-environment and of the capacity for heightened unitive consciousness lies deep within the person in structure-bound aspects of that feeling process which Carl Rogers has signalled out as being at the heart of constructive personality

change. To the extent that this process of experiencing is structure-bound it blocks movement toward fuller human functioning and the heightened modes of unitive awareness associated with this manner of existing.

Let's now consider the immediate relevance of this material for our critical evaluation of the techniques of deautomatization to achieve higher states of unitive consciousness. The fact that such techniques are used almost universally in all religious traditions is not in dispute. The importance of this theory for understanding the nature and purpose of contemplative meditation, renunciation and drug usage within religious traditions is not questioned. Perhaps more than any other, the theory of deautomatization clearly describes a fundamental strategy employed by many of the great religious leaders, sages and saints in their quest for ways of conquering the illusions of the world and themselves in order to achieve union with God or whatever were the particular goals set out by their religious traditions. As such, this theory is of extreme importance for understanding what has been and is going on within the various ascetical traditions.

The one question which we are asking, however, is to what extent these various techniques actually contribute to fuller human functioning and constructive personality change as they have been described in the writings of Carl Rogers

and others in the orientation of Third and Fourth Force psychology. It is with this in mind that we must now look at a fundamental objection which can be levelled against the use of all these techniques. It is an objection which stems directly from the negative influence which the methods of deautomatization can have upon the forward movement of the experiencing process.

3. A Critique of Deautomatization of Perception as a Method for Achieving Unitive Consciousness in View of Research on Congruence with the Experiencing Process.

a) Deautomatization and the Extreme Structure-Bound Manner of Experiencing

When discussing what he terms an extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing, Dr. Gendlin includes within this categorization the following conditions and triggers: psychoses, dreams, hypnosis, CO₂, LSD, and stimulus deprivation. It will be noted that some of the triggers which can produce deautomatization are included in this listing. What are Gendlin's reasons for labeling these triggers and situations as ones which produce a manner of experiencing that is not only structure-bound but extreme? His summary is as follows:

Throughout, we have been discussing the felt, implicit functioning of the interaction process we term "experiencing." We have been pointing out that all appropriate behavior and interpretations of present situations depend on this felt functioning [...]

When the interaction process is greatly curtailed (as in sleep, hypnosis, psychosis, and isolation experiments), the inwardly felt experiencing is thereby curtailed. The individual then lacks the implicit function of felt experiencing and loses both his sense of "self" and his capacity to respond to and interpret present events appropriately. Both require the felt process just illustrated.

The peculiar phenomena which occur under these circumstances are somewhat more understandable when they are considered in terms of curtailment or stoppage of the interaction process and implicit function of felt experiencing.⁹⁹

Dreams, hypnosis, the isolating characteristics of stimulus deprivation (which would be one characteristic of contemplative meditation and renunciation), as well as any break in physiological interaction brought on by the use of drugs, all tend to inhibit on-going contact in the present that can carry forward the experiencing process. When such a break occurs, the self-process is halted and the sense of self is radically altered. A vital point of reference, namely, contact with the present and a sense for oneself as a forward moving process of interaction with there-and-now reality, is lost.

The ability to interpret present events is diminished along with a realistic sense for oneself in contact with

99 Ibid., p. 164.

these same events. In such a situation what becomes the object of experience is not interaction with an experiencing process that is vitally engaged with present reality, but rather various structures and automatizations in themselves.

Ordinarily, past experiences and learnings function implicitly in felt experiencing, so that we interpret and perceive the present, not the past experiences themselves. Yet under hypnosis, in dreams, and in hallucinations, we may perceive rigid structures and past events as such.¹⁰⁰

By greatly curtailing the normal interaction process through meditation, asceticism, drugs and the various techniques described by Ludwig, the process of experiencing is itself significantly reduced. This is because many of the normal avenues of contact and interaction which would sustain experiencing and the sense of self-process are deliberately cut down on. In such a situation the very automatizations and structure-bound manner of experiencing then fill the perceptual screen. But in this instance, the automatizations are viewed in themselves apart from an implicitly functioning process of experiencing, apart from a sense of self-process.

The sense of self shifts from the on-going process of experiencing to an unfamiliar contact with isolated fragments or automatizations that constitute a strange perceptual world in themselves. For Gendlin, this type of awareness represents

100 Loc. Cit.

an extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing.

It is in this situation that an unusual experience occurs.

Another characteristic shared by dreams, hypnosis, psychosis, and the phenomena obtained in stimulus-deprivation and LSD, is the loss of a sense of self. (Emphasis ours)¹⁰¹

However, in this instance loss of the more or less habitual boundaries of self together with the subsequent sense of de-differentiation associated with a further, more extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing does not come from a breakdown of rigid, isolating self-structures. Rather, it is caused by further curtailment of interaction and self-process. It represents the absence of felt-functioning and the carrying forward of implicit experiencing. In other words, it is the exact opposite of what occurs throughout the process of healthy congruence development and forward movement of the experiencing process.

This loss of self is due to the missing felt functioning of experiencing. Just as outward events (to the extent of psychosis) are not interpreted and interacted with on the basis of felt experiencing, so also this felt experiencing is missing for self-responses.¹⁰²

Gendlin's research indicates a direct connection may exist between the loss of self, occasioned by narrowing of

101 Ibid., p. 166.

102 Loc. Cit.

the interaction process through use of various deautomatizing techniques, and certain altered states where the mode of perception can mimic more maturing forms of unitive consciousness. Insofar as loss of the more or less habitual sense of self includes any de-differentiation or unusual breakdown in what are considered to be stable or established identifying marks of the sense of self, such a dissolution could easily be interpreted as a form of unitive consciousness. This would especially be true where the de-differentiation seemed to involve a certain release or liberation from confinement. For the person whose existence is largely structure-bound in the manner of experiencing, any unusual shifts in perception or alterations in what little self-process might still remain, could easily be considered a movement in the direction of unitive consciousness.

Gendlin's conclusions raise some serious questions regarding the process of deautomatization as a means to achieve fuller human functioning. Arthur Diekman suggests that the automatization which blocks unitive consciousness is broken by reinvesting the percept with attention, deliberately focusing attention on the automatization in itself in order to bring back to awareness those aspects that had slipped from consciousness, thereby liberating a certain freshness of perception. But, one can legitimately ask to what extent such deliberate focusing on the automatization

actually involves the same basic mechanisms which operate in the narrowing of interaction that can result in an extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing?

Diekman is most probably quite accurate in his description of deautomatization as a technique used by some mystics to achieve a form of unitive consciousness. However, Diekman's conclusion is that the altered state of consciousness and unitive experience results because a basic automatization has been broken. Gendlin, on the other hand, implies that the altering of consciousness in such instances is the result not of some break in an already established automatization or structure-bound manner of experiencing. Rather, it is the further narrowing of what self-process may remain in a person that produces the shift in perception. According to Gendlin, then, the original automatization would not necessarily be broken at all. Instead, some other process aspect would be further diminished, thereby bringing on alterations in consciousness which could easily be "interpreted" as breaks in the automatization where attention was focused.

Alexander Lowen, well known for his research on the role of the body in the release of human potential, arrives at a similar conclusion when examining the relationship of LSD and consciousness expansion.

The current tendency is to equate personality with consciousness and to identify a so-called expansion of consciousness with a growth of the personality. This is the rubric under which the use of LSD finds its justification. Since every new experience seems to offer an opportunity to enlarge one's consciousness and awareness, the ultimate result of this belief is the doctrine that "anything goes and everything is possible." Every record made is to be surpassed. And every sensory modality is to be exploited in the attempt to extend one's experience.

Does this practice lead to an expansion of consciousness? Are the exponents of this philosophy more alive, more alert, and more in touch with life? The user of LSD takes a "trip" into strange and uncertain lands far removed from his normal perceptions. The drug accomplishes this by reducing self-perception, by detaching the mind from the body and allowing it to float in the nebulous world of images. If consciousness is expanded in the direction of imagery, it is diminished in the perception of bodily sensations, feelings, and relationships. If the mind is thus stimulated, the body is stupefied. If sensitivity to sensory stimuli is sharpened, kinesthetic and proprioceptive sensitivity is dulled. The LSD trip is a voyage in fantasy and not an adventure in reality.

The foundation of consciousness is the perception of the body. When this perception is decreased, as in sensory deprivation, conscious orientation in time and space is lost. A consciousness that is not rooted in the here and now borders on the illusory. To be conscious, one must be more aware of the present, more aware of "one's presence." To be more in touch with reality, one has to be more in touch with his body. To be more alive is to have more feeling.

Personality is broader than consciousness, it includes the unconscious or involuntary processes of the body, it is an expression of the total being; of its physical vitality, of its muscular coordination, of its inner harmony and outward grace. The magnetism of a personality is, in short, the radiance of an alive body in which the mental and physical aspects reflect each other like a superbly cut diamond.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Alexander Lowen, "Sexuality, Sex and Human Potential", in Human Potentialities, Herbert A. Otto, ed., St. Louis, Warren H. Green, Inc., 1968, p. 171-172.

The paradox which is revealed when Gendlin's conclusions are applied to the study of primary religious experience and the development of unitive consciousness is quite profound. While the professed goal of contemplative meditation, renunciation, and drug usage is to break the rigid, structure-bound manner of experiencing that holds a person back from movement toward greater unitive consciousness, the application of various techniques for deautomatization can bring about the exact opposite effect and induce an even more extreme state of rigidity. At this point of initial research, the possibility will have to be faced that many of the techniques which rely on a so-called deautomatizing principle, may actually achieve their alteration in consciousness through a further restriction of the growth process.

b) The Unowned Quality of Structure-Bound Experiencing

That such blockage of the experiencing process and fixity is not immediately recognized for what it really is can, in large part, be accounted for by another characteristic which invariably accompanies loss in the sense of self following on the use of drugs, hypnosis, stimulus deprivation, etc. It is what can be called the unowned quality of the experience. Since this latter characteristic is frequently associated with the fruitful application of the techniques of meditation and asceticism, it is extremely relevant for

our investigation of primary religious experience.

In dreams what we perceive is beyond the control, interpretation, ownership, of the self (or ego). In hypnosis the individual specifically accepts another's suggestions for his own and totally permits them to replace his own self-responding. And in psychosis so often the patient complains: "I didn't do that. Something made me do it"; or "I'm not myself"; or "These voices are not mine"; or "Inside me I'm nothing at all." The hallucinations, voices, and things in his head are not felt to be his own. He lacks the sense of self. If he does have a sense of self (an "intact ego"), this felt sense does not inform the hallucinatory phenomena. In regard to these, he has no sense of self that implicitly contains their meaning. (Emphasis ours)¹⁰⁴

The religious person, if he be theistic, invariably has a theological framework within which to interpret various unusual experiences that might happen to him. However, for both the theistic and non-theistic mystic, the gift element, or outside origin, or process not his own,--in other words, the unowned aspect is extremely important. The person is surprised, caught up, transported by something other than himself over which he has no control. What happens to him is "felt not to be his own", but the action upon him of some other or higher power.

It was just this characteristic which William James noted in his fourth mark of mystical consciousness:

¹⁰⁴ Eugene T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change", p. 166.

Passivity--Although the oncoming of mystical states may be facilitated by preliminary voluntary operations, as by fixing the attention, or going through certain bodily performances, or in other ways which manuals of mysticism prescribe; yet when the characteristic sort of consciousness once has set in, the mystic feels as if his own will were in abeyance, and indeed sometimes as if he were grasped and held by a superior power.¹⁰⁵

It is crucial to keep in mind that a possible explanation for some unusual shifts in perception which are directly experienced as not stemming from or unowned by the person himself (even though in reality they actually are), and which are further interpreted by that person as being caused by another or higher power, are simply due to the missing felt functioning of experiencing.

The unowned perception is often of a de-differentiation or loss in the clearly defined sense of self. Such an experience obviously lends itself to be interpreted as an experience of union since the defining characteristics of the self as set off against external reality are disturbed. Moreover, the unowned quality of the perception is of extreme importance within the religious setting. This is because a theological framework and overbelief system that locates the causal source of transcendent experience and heightened states of unitive consciousness within the Godhead as a distinct reality from the individual, can easily interpret the unowned

¹⁰⁵ William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Mentor Books, New York, New American Library, 1958, p. 293.

dimension of the experience in terms of God as its source.
In reality, however, it is simply an unfamiliar aspect of
the person's own structure-bound experiencing which has
risen to the surface of consciousness.

Insofar as such an unowned perception is relatively pleasant and, through its unusualness, represents something novel when compared with the stereotyped, programmed existence that a person might have been leading up to the time that a so-called deautomatizing trigger was used, then such an experience could easily be interpreted by the individual as a form of heightened awareness including a dimension of unitive consciousness that liberated him from a confining sense of self. The paradox, however, would be that when considered in terms of growth toward congruence with the experiencing process and movement toward fuller human functioning, such an experience of supposed liberation would actually represent the further diminishment of whatever degree of self-process a person might have obtained.

The supposed release experienced in the extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing would not be long lasting since the blocked feeling processes of the individual are not being resolved. This kind of ersatz release might easily mimic the more profound liberation that comes with movement toward greater congruence. But once the drug or hypnosis had worn off, or the stimulus deprivation had ceased,

unless there had somehow been a significant forward movement in the manner of experiencing, the experience of liberation would also come to an end. Then, as we experience all too often, the individual would be faced with the task of continuing to artificially induce what he considers to have been an experience of liberation. But whether such artificial inducement is maintained through increased use of drugs, or vigorous asceticism, the experienced liberation ultimately continues to lack an organismic basis to support it until such time as the original structure-bound feeling process once again begins to move forward and there is genuine self-process.

c) Deautomatization, The Loss of Self,
and the Incongruent Person

One final point, now, on the less congruent person and the imposition of a more or less extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing through the use of deautomatizing techniques.

It must be remembered that for Gendlin and Rogers, the self-process is the on-going response to felt-functioning through congruence and openness to experiencing. The sense of self of the maturing, congruent individual, although quite fluid, is, nonetheless, stable in that it is grounded in a trust in the growth potential and right direction taken by

the fully functioning organism. Such a self is best conceptualized from the vantage point proposed by Rogers and the Humanists, not as a bundle of identifiable contents, but as a process, an organismic flowing--or, in the case of the fixed and incongruent individual, a largely blocked, fixated process. This latter refers to the person who for the most part repeats various stale patterns because he is incapable of carrying forward his own feeling process so there can be forward movement in his quality of experiencing.

The loss of self, however, is really a variable concept allowing for great latitude and degree of such loss. Since hardly anyone is perfectly congruent or totally incongruent, there are obviously different degrees of felt functioning within experiencing. In most people there is usually some minimal capacity for self-process except in the most extreme cases. Even though severe blockages may be operative, effectively preventing forward movement, the client-centered approach to therapeutic growth depends upon the therapist being able to pick up some implicit, felt meaning to which he can respond.

When Gendlin speaks of stimulus deprivation, LSD or Hypnosis as extreme structure-bound modes of experiencing, he seems to imply that no matter what the degree of interaction process going on within an individual, the blocks created by the above-mentioned conditions are so great, so extreme,

that whatever the degree of self-process, it is eventually stopped--at least momentarily.

In other words, the person who may have begun to experience a certain degree of flow characterized by stage three of Carl Rogers' congruence continuum and the person who may be functioning at stage seven could both experience a loss of self directly proportioned to the degree of self-process that they were at that time. Most probably, the greater the degree of congruence and self-process, the slower such an individual would be to succumb to the extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing induced by the drugs and techniques that can block the interaction process. This seems to be born out by Gendlin's following statement:

We have defined the self as self-process. The self exists to the extent that the individual can carry his felt process forward by means of his own symbols, behaviors, or attention. Experiments with stimulus deprivation have found that individuals who develop psychosis more slowly have a greater capacity to respond to themselves (the most "imagination" and "creativity," it was called). (Emphasis ours) The finding would corroborate our views since, to the extent the individual can carry forward his own experiencing, he will be maintaining (by symbols and attention) his interaction process. When the interaction process is greatly narrowed, not only do psychotic-like experiences occur, but the sense of "self" is lost. The felt process to which there can be self-response becomes static and the individual has unowned perceptions.¹⁰⁶

106 Eugene T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change", p. 166.

The greater capacity to respond to oneself and move the feeling process forward is a mark of the congruent and more fully functioning person. The less congruent a person is, therefore, the weaker would be his interaction process and the greater a likelihood that he would more quickly lose whatever degree of self-process he had attained.

With all the preceding material of the last three chapters as background material, now, let us try to summarize and see what conclusions and statements about future research can be made regarding congruence and deautomatization of perception as roads to unitive consciousness and heightened religious awareness.

CHAPTER V

RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PROJECTS

When discussing mysticism and saintliness, both Evelyn Underhill and William James stressed that some type of character transformation was an essential hallmark of those maturing into higher states of religious consciousness. A basic problem, however, for the serious investigator into the nature of religious awareness is that many persons seem to have alterations in perception and unitive experiences which they interpret as being of a religious nature, yet in the long run their inhibiting personal deficiencies remain the same, their basic needs remain largely unanswered, and constructive personality change does not result from their efforts. Their religious experience has not moved them toward fuller human functioning. While they may enjoy many of the emotional overtones of higher states of consciousness, and numerous unitive perceptions which appear to be like those described in the more advanced mystic states, somehow the perceptive onlooker has the feeling that the essential motor of personality change or character transformation has not been brought into the picture. There appear to be superficial similarities that compare with the states of consciousness of a more mature religious person, but on the whole maturity itself seems to be lacking and only

the hollow shell of altered perceptions and heightened modes of what appear to be unitive consciousness remain.

As indicated in our previous chapters, if it is neither introjected values nor deautomatization of perception but congruence with the experiencing process that brings about constructive personality change and fuller human functioning, then it would also seem legitimate and logical to presume that it is not the artificially induced unitive perception but rather the one which naturally grows out of organismic ripeness and congruence with a feeling process that would also be characteristic of mature religious consciousness.

The artificially induced unitive perception (using any of the five ways indicated by Dr. Ludwig, or the various forms of renunciation and contemplative meditation outlined by Dr. Diekman) does not in any way seem to depend upon an ability to move forward the experiencing process (according to Gendlin's and Rogers' understanding of this term) in order to radically alter the state of consciousness. Rather, the means employed to trigger these unusual states of consciousness (which can easily be interpreted as being of a religious nature and origin) depends almost entirely upon a kind of external tampering with the mechanics of perception. The accustomed nutriment for ordinary perception is deliberately withheld or increased so that a so-called deautomatizing

effect may be achieved.

Even though one may grant that the motive for undergoing the ascetical practices or the contemplative exercises may be for what the individual in question considers to be profound religious reasons--the love of God, atonement for sin, the need for conversion, petition, etc.--and even though many intense emotions may be called into play, nonetheless, from a purely psychological point of view, it is in no way necessary that the self-propelled feeling process which is the essential motor of personality change be engaged during such activity.

Moreover, if we follow Gendlin's analysis of the extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing, we would have to conclude that any activity, which through stimulus deprivation, hypnosis, or change in body chemistry somehow curtails the normal interaction process, would of necessity further block the possibility of any forward movement in the experiencing process. This would mean that while an individual might lose his habitual sense of self and have unusual and unowned perceptions, he would not necessarily have progressed into the kind of unitive awareness that characterizes what classical authors seem to have described as mature religious consciousness.

If Gendlin, Rogers and the other Humanists are correct, it is most probable that many of the techniques which

people believe break the restricting automatizations, actually do not do that at all. Rather, there is every reason to suppose from the available evidence that instead of breaking the automatizations they may actually substitute (either temporarily or permanently) a further, more structure-bound manner of experiencing in its place.

If the experiencing process is not carried forward, then, an organismic basis for the stale, programmed, or automatized perception pattern remains. The deautomatizing influence may momentarily appear to over-ride the rigid perceptions associated with a particular structure-bound manner of experiencing. But this is not enough to establish a more constructive mode of perception unless (1) some other factors enter in to carry forward the experiencing process, or (2) the deautomatizing technique is adopted as a permanent aspect of life in order to more or less perpetually maintain the artificially induced mode of consciousness.

In the first instance, it would not directly be the deautomatization which brings about the perception shift associated with forward movement of the experiencing process. Rather, such movement toward fuller human functioning together with the loosening of perception patterns associated with it would be due to those factors supporting development of a higher degree of congruence.

In the second instance, forward movement of the feeling process is permanently by-passed and a more rigid structure-bound manner of experiencing, together with the necessary life-style to support it, is substituted in its place.

It seems to me that there is a tremendous risk involved when fundamentally incongruent people are encouraged within a religious setting to take up various techniques, forms of asceticism and contemplative meditation which have as their goal heightened awareness obtained through some form of deautomatization of perception. Even though such ascetical exercises are presented as ways of preparing oneself for some socially acceptable religious goal, nonetheless, insofar as they are techniques for deautomatization, they function as such. To the extent that such methods lead a basically incongruent person into an even more structure-bound manner of experiencing than that which he may already possess, they effectively isolate him from the possibility of growth. His attention will be drawn further and further away from his own experiencing process and focused on the mechanical shifts in perception which he comes to value as the way to what ^{William}James referred to as a wider sense of self through which saving experience comes. Such a person will not value closeness to his own experiencing, but rather take every available means to run further away from it into the

arms of an artificial manipulation of perception and dubious form of consciousness which he can only maintain by vigorously continuing the asceticism, meditation or drug usage which makes it possible.

The real tragedy in these instances is that such self-defeating activity is often taught by the guru or spiritual guide and embraced by the disciple with the utmost sincerity.

The ultimate tragedy, however, comes when an individual takes up a particular asceticism or mode of contemplation and begins to progress along what he considers to be the mystic way. Various changes in his perceptual patterns naturally occur as the techniques for deautomatization take effect, and this further encourages him that he is on the right path, stimulating him and providing motivation to persevere in his difficult venture. The end result, however, is that for the highest of religious reasons, the person in question often ends by forcing upon himself a structure-bound manner of experiencing so extreme that future growth and forward movement of the feeling process are made all but impossible.

No doubt some so-called mystics may have lived their entire religious life on a kind of perceptual 'high' simply by continuing the structure-bound manner of experiencing which their asceticisms and forms of meditation re-enforced.

Where necessary, they may have simply escalated the deautomatization triggers in order to continue enjoying the mode of perception valued by their particular tradition. The ready-made superstructure of theology and overbelief interpretation provided them with a source of motivation both to continue their self-defeating asceticism and to have a ready answer for any breakdowns or further unusual shifts.

Because deautomatization focuses on the immediately recognizable mechanics of perception, which can be altered, it at first seems to contain the essential ingredients for encouraging the kind of experimental mysticism that is in vogue today. The unitive perceptions described by the mystics and their commentators appear to be achieved when these various techniques and triggers are seriously used in a coordinated program for heightening the particular manner of awareness being sought.

However, it seems to me, when one takes a broader view of the history and literature of mysticism and the contemporary interest in heightened states of unitive consciousness achieved in zen, yoga, Transcendental Meditation and the like, that such literature often describes and contains an indiscriminate and confusing muddle of deautomatizing techniques together with genuine insight into the nature of maturing human and religious development. Yet, no one seems to have pulled them sufficiently apart to critically evaluate

what is actually going on within the perception patterns and human development of the individuals involved. This dissertation hopefully represents one step in unravelling the confusion.

The loss of self which comes from an extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing is often uncritically lumped together with the unitive consciousness characterizing the more open, unthreatened manner of perception that appears in the later stages of congruence development described by Carl Rogers.

If the orientation of Rogers and the Humanists is followed, however, then the values and perceptions associated with fuller human functioning are seen to grow out of, rather than being imposed on the organism. Moreover, as we have tried to show, the tendency toward less defensiveness, less structure-bound experiencing, and more unitive perception associated with the development of congruence and greater maturity in the organism shows a marked similarity to many of the characteristics identified as proper to heightened states of mature religious awareness.

Earlier we quoted Joseph Hart as he described one of the sources in client-centered therapy that lead to experimental mysticism:

One source is in the theory of experiencing. This theory [...] posits the locus of man's existence within the flow of his own meaningful experience. The man who cannot live in this flow lives at a lower level of consciousness, deprived of his potentiality, of his legitimate birthright. Clearly, this secular theoretical position is compatible, if not identical, with the religious attitudes of mysticism. The way to realization is within.¹

Perhaps now, with the discussion of congruence and experiencing behind us, we are in a position to better appreciate the significance of Hart's insight. As I mentioned earlier, he does not spell out the implications of his statement. The purpose of this dissertation has been to explore this area further.

If there is to be a truly humanizing form of experimental mysticism, then, it must be able to aid in the development not merely of unusual perception patterns associated with altered states of consciousness, but encourage the potential for transcendence, congruence and unitive consciousness which is an integral part of the human organism. History shows that the truly positive and constructive element of religion, insofar as it can serve as a catalyst for human evolution, has always been concerned with the development of this maturing capacity.

¹ Joseph T. Hart, "Beyond Psychotherapy - The Applied Psychology of the Future", in New Directions in Client-Centered Therapy, Joseph T. Hart and T. M. Tomlinson, Eds., Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1970, p. 556.

As I mentioned earlier, a central problem in the study of higher states of unitive consciousness associated with religious experience has always been the indiscriminate confusing of much that is valid and can be considered growth-producing in mystical literature with techniques for altering perception in a way that mimics the expanded sense of self associated with integration and growth into greater congruence with the experiencing process. The mystics themselves are guilty of mixing the two, and one sometimes wonders about their own ability to distinguish between unitive experiences that grew out of their own developing capacity for being-awareness and ones which were the result of somewhat mechanically altering their perception patterns with a simple technique.

One must, therefore, be a little more realistic and critical of the quotation from Michael Murphy cited in Chapter I that dealt with various ways to transcendent experience and unitive consciousness:

All of these disciplines--whether explicitly seeking transcendence or not--share certain salient features. They all focus attention upon unfamiliar aspects or possibilities of one's world; they all attempt to break perceptual constancies; they all require surrender at crucial moments to alien and formerly resisted perceptions or feelings; they all engender increased vitality and joy and a greater sense of meaning, freedom and power when their practice is successful. Common to the practitioners of all of them is the sense that a fuller reality has made itself known, that something more has entered one's being, that a grace has been bestowed [...] This feeling of being entered--or entering upon--something greater is at the heart of the sense of transcendence.²

Such a statement could easily have been quoted at the end of the chapter on deautomatization, or at the conclusion of our discussion of Carl Rogers' description of the various stages in the development of congruence. In both instances the quotation would have been apt and made perfect sense.

However, if there is to be a solidly grounded basis for experimental mysticism, then such statements simply cannot be accepted at face value but must be subjected to the kind of critical analysis for which this dissertation has attempted to lay a foundation. It should be clear by now that "this feeling of being entered--or entering upon--something greater" is not an infallible sign of forward progress. The "surrender to alien and formerly resisted perceptions or

² Michael H. Murphy, "Education for Transcendence", in The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1969, p. 21.

feelings" is a two-edged sword. It can imply progress toward greater congruence or regression.

The critical element we have tried to isolate is what we have attempted to describe in our analysis of congruence and forward movement of the experiencing process. Religious leaders and educators desperately need to develop greater facility in being able to discern when this radical kind of development is taking place within the person. For it is in this more organismic transformation that the true sources of person-education and religious experience are rooted.

I am reminded of a thrilling statement made by George Leonard just last year in a statement to the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Education in the State of California. Leonard concluded his remarks on the development of person-values and character by saying that:

The purpose of the new character training could be teaching young men and women to participate in the greatest adventure in human history, the transformation of our life and our consciousness into higher states.³

I could not agree more with this understanding of education that attempts to push way beyond the mechanization and computerization of graduate and undergraduate education. In one

³ George Leonard, Statement to the Joint Committee on the Master Plan for Education, California State Legislature, John Vasconcellos, Chairman, September 17, 1971, p. 7.

sense, I am sure that the same fundamental values which are at the heart of the truly religious quest also represent an important goal of education as well.

However, at the same time, I must accept such a statement with a certain reserve--knowing full well that the hucksters of the new consciousness can easily avail themselves of techniques developed over the centuries which give the illusion of progress at the expense of personal integrity and fuller human functioning. In the hands of unscrupulous individuals for whom power is the mainstay of life the organized use of such techniques could easily bring the 1984 depicted by George Orwell one step closer to reality.

By way of summing up, then, it might be good to recall once again the initial hypothesis that guided the present research project. Stated in question form it ran as follows:

Does Third and Fourth Force Psychology provide new knowledge about primary religious experience which might serve as a basis for an initial formulation of a Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology of Religion?

The actual formulation of a full-fledged approach to the psychology of religion growing out of the Humanistic and Transpersonal approach would at this early stage be a mammoth project. Therefore, it seemed more reasonable to let the first step in such a long-term undertaking be an initial assessment of whether the psychological orientations in question could constructively deal with some practical research

problems in the field of religious studies. The over-riding hypothesis remained as the long-term goal. But for purposes of the present dissertation it was further restricted to two practical and inter-related questions that were formulated as follows:

- (1) Can Humanistic-Transpersonal psychology contribute any hypotheses to explain some of the psychological dynamics that underly the shift in perception and developing sense of self ordinarily associated with the unitive experiences that characterize more advanced states of primary religious consciousness?
- (2) Can Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology offer any hypotheses to determine whether the unitive dimension of primary religious experience supports an individual in the process of becoming a more fully functioning person?

These two questions were further specified in terms of a comparison between techniques for deautomatization and the development of congruence with the experiencing process as ways of achieving and critically understanding the dynamics of unitive consciousness insofar as such awareness contributed to the development of a more fully functioning person.

The research conclusions of the dissertation, may be stated as follows:

- (1) A Humanistic-Transpersonal orientation in psychology can offer at least two hypotheses to explain some of the psychological dynamics that underly the shift in perception and developing sense of self ordinarily associated with the unitive experiences that characterize more advanced

states of primary religious consciousness. These two hypotheses are a deautomatization of perception and congruence with the experiencing process.

(2) A Humanistic-Transpersonal orientation in psychology can offer at least one way of determining whether the unitive dimension of primary religious experience supports an individual in the process of becoming a more fully functioning person. It is the extent to which such unitive experience arises out of and encourages congruence with the continued forward movement of a process of feeling or experiencing taking place within a person, rather than representing what is called a simple deautomatization resulting from unusual shifts or alterations in the mechanics of perception.

(3) Insofar as a deautomatization of perception can involve development of an extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing, it will most probably retard any movement toward congruence and fuller human functioning until such time as a personal relationship or some other circumstance helps move the experiencing process forward once again.

(4) Some form of what is interpreted as "unitive consciousness" may arise from both a deautomatization of perception and congruence with the experiencing process. However, the de-differentiation and loss of self arising from deautomatization and a more structure-bound manner of

experiencing has a radically different source than the expansion of personal boundaries associated with healthy growth into greater congruence. Various overbelief religious interpretations of the perceptual shifts associated with experiences of unitive consciousness do not always take these different sources into consideration. As a result, great harm can be done--especially to the less congruent person--who, perhaps for the sincerest of religious motives, uncritically embraces or is forced into the use of deautomatizing techniques which actually rob him of what little self-process may still be his.

The initial dissertation hypothesis asked whether a Humanistic-Transpersonal approach might provide new knowledge about primary religious experience as a possible basis for another orientation in the psychology of religion. It was decided at the outset that such a question could only be considered after it had been shown that the Humanistic and Transpersonal approaches could provide material that shed light on practical problems in the field of religious studies in such a way as to merit further investigation. It is hoped that the material presented may serve as some indication of the rich potential which lies largely untapped within Third and Fourth Force Psychology for the serious student of religion.

The contemporary surge of interest in the techniques of yoga, meditation, and various life-styles that lead to

heightened states of unitive consciousness gives some indication of the need for transcendence manifested in the present generation. This is a bright sign of hope in one sense, for it is a distinctive mark of the human spirit to always be seeking new ways to move beyond traditional boundaries and limitations. But the way of growth is easily confused with brightly lit dead-ends that tend to trap the unwary. Growth into higher states of unitive consciousness that are truly a sign of healthy development is a long-term venture quite distinct from the Friday night turn-on. It is a mark of the mature individual that he is not easily sidetracked by the glitter and fools-gold that now appears in increasing abundance.

It is interesting that William James and Carl Jung, great psychologists and professionally interested in mysticism though they were, both showed a marked reluctance to gain practical training in the various Eastern techniques which they were convinced yielded practical results in the form of heightened unitive consciousness. Both men were widely read in the literature and traveled extensively so that a teacher would have been readily available. Thus, their slowness to embrace these techniques is all the more puzzling.

James never gave his reasons for remaining aloof, but Jung did. He articulated his concern (in this

particular instance regarding the use of yoga by Western man) in terms of his own approach through depth psychology.

Western man has no need of more superiority over nature, whether outside or inside. He has both in almost devilish perfection. What he lacks is conscious recognition of his inferiority to the nature around and within him. He must learn that he may not do exactly as he wills [...] Since Western man can turn everything into a technique, it is true in principle that everything that looks like a method is either dangerous or condemned to futility. Insofar as yoga is a form of hygiene, it is as useful to him as any other system. In the deepest sense, however, yoga does not mean this but, if I understand it correctly, a great deal more, namely the final release and detachment of consciousness from all bondage to object and subject [...] my criticism is directed solely against the application of yoga to the peoples of the West [...] Western civilization is scarcely a thousand years old and must first of all free itself from its barbarous one-sidedness. This means, above all, deeper insight into the nature of man. But no insight is gained by repressing and controlling the unconscious, and least of all by imitating methods which have grown up under totally different psychological conditions. In the course of the centuries the West will produce its own yoga, and it will be on the basis laid down by Christianity.⁴

Writing as a Christian, I cannot help but be struck by the possibilities of what has been called an incarnational theology that is implicit within the kind of Christian yoga that Jung envisages. In an earlier publication I tried to indicate that one aspect of a profound evolution taking place within the Christian church was a radical transformation occurring within people's conceptualization of God. There seems

⁴ Carl G. Jung, Psychology and Religion: West and East, Collected Works, Vol. II, New York, Pantheon, 1958, p. 535-537.

evident a movement from identifying God as a person to some sort of personalizing experience or activity.⁵ This tendency is, in a very profound sense, the beginning of an attempt to reformulate the God-experience in terms of a more diffuse field theory conceptualization of the divinity.

Gregory Baum, in his thought-provoking and seminal work Man Becoming⁶ touches on the same shift in perception.

It may very well be that the foundations for a Christian yoga to which Jung refers are already being prepared, and that any future conceptualization of God will somehow include an element of some sacred activity within which the God consciousness is born into the lives of individual men and women. One cannot help but see broad areas of comparison waiting to be worked out between the biblical notion of God as agape and the transformations associated with growth into congruence with the experiencing process.

It is most probable that the craze over "technique" singled out by Jung is a sign of the profound deficiency of being-cognition and congruence in our Western world. Because so many people do not possess a real sense for their own

5 Peter A. Campbell and Edwin M. McMahon, The In-Between: Evolution in Christian Faith, New York, Sheed and Ward, 1969, cf. especially chapters 3 to 5.

6 Gregory Baum, Man Becoming: God in Secular Experience, New York, Herder and Herder, 1970, xiv-285 p.

self-process, that "deeper insight into the nature of man" to which Jung referred, their principal experience of change is a somewhat superficial deautomatization (which may actually be a further temporary restricting of their self-process together with the unusual perceptions associated with such blockage).

In another sense, the fascination with technique may also be a somewhat sophisticated extension of what is considered the primitive magical mentality. If one has the proper technique, like having the right words and magical formula, all will be well.

Because of the cult of efficiency in our Western world the search for short-cuts has almost become a national disease. If we can program and speed up assembly line production, why not do the same with unitive experience. And so, the hustlers and hucksters of the new consciousness descend upon a confused and searching public, peddling their wares among the unsuspecting.

But in so many instances what seems to be provided is not the true liberation which comes with substantial human development. Rather, essentially the same type of alienating consciousness is substituted for the already structure-bound manner of experiencing which restricts constructive growth toward fuller human functioning. Ultimately, therefore, one must question the benefit of the simple

substitution of one form of structure-bound experiencing for another. Even granting that the replacement might make for what appears to be a better external integration into society--is this kind of substitution really a solidly founded approach to human development and mature religious consciousness?

I can only return to what I hope may be the core of an original insight that I have begun to present in order to answer this question. If genuine congruence and forward movement of the experiencing process are part of the approach to heightening awareness through some form of experimental mysticism, then, growth and fuller human functioning may very well result from whatever technique is used. If, however, congruence is absent--and there does not yet appear to be sufficient evidence to show that forward movement of the experiencing process plays a functional role in the process of deautomatization--then, there may be significant changes in perception, there may be alterations in the quality of the models, categories or hypnoses, there may even be an enhanced ability to cope with certain previously unresolvable situations. But, in the last analysis, I wonder whether the person will have truly entered into the depths of his own being and there discovered true peace and wisdom simply by being his true self.

Some Future Research Projects

Let us now conclude by indicating a few follow-up research topics which naturally flow from our presentation. They represent areas which would further extend and clarify an understanding of primary religious experience and the dynamics involved in unitive consciousness which are important areas of research for the psychology of religion.

a) The Use of Techniques for Deautomatization
by the Congruent Person

A fundamental question that still needs further research is the extent to which any of the deautomatizing techniques mentioned can contribute to growth in an individual who already possesses a high level of congruence and a developed ability to carry forward his own experiencing process.

Eugene Gendlin was quite critical of what he called "self-engineering" as a substitute for the process of focusing which brought about constructive forward movement in the feeling process.

In (self-engineering) one does not attend to one's felt meaning. Instead, one "talks at" oneself, inwardly. One is very active and constructive, arranging and rearranging one's feelings without stopping to sense quite what they are. This self-engineering is clearly different from focusing on a felt referent and the sensing and symbolizing of its implicit meaning.⁷

Those familiar with William James' consideration of the "mind-cure" movement⁸ or Maxwell Maltz's "psycho-cybernetics"⁹ might regard these as instances of this particular aspect of self-engineering.

As far as Gendlin is concerned, this particular kind of activity has nothing to do with the focusing that is active in the process of congruence development. If in the process of self-engineering there is a deautomatization, for example, of a poor self-image, what is actually substituted for it does not spring from growth in experiencing, but is simply a more healthy automatization substituted in place of the less acceptable self-image. To put it even more bluntly, instead of being hypnotized into thinking that he is a nobody, now the hapless individual is hypnotized into thinking that

7 Eugene T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change", in New Directions in Client-Centered Therapy, Joseph T. Hart and T. M. Tomlinson, Eds., Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1970, p. 150.

8 William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, Mentor Books, New York, New American Library, 1958, p. 150; cf. especially Lectures IV and V on "The Religion of Healthy-Mindedness".

9 Maxwell Maltz, Psycho-Cybernetics, Essandes Edition, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1968.

he is somebody. His experience of actually being somebody does not stem from closeness to his own experiencing process.

One way that effective research might be inaugurated to further test possible conditions under which the techniques of deautomatization could be used to encourage growth toward more organismically grounded unitive consciousness would be to begin by selecting the type of self-actualizing persons whom Abraham Maslow chose to further understand. When working with people who give every indication of being healthily congruent, able to focus, trust in the wisdom of their own organism and carry forward their own feeling processes, the researcher would then be in a position to consider what happens when such people employ many of the techniques which we have considered in this dissertation. Hopefully, such individuals would be close enough to their own experiencing process to be able to discern whether their use of a particular technique of deautomatization produced more structure-bound experiencing within them, or actually aided their own forward movement into organismically grounded unitive consciousness.

Eugene Gendlin is somewhat ambivalent on this point. In one sense he concludes that hypnosis, sensory deprivation, etc. produce further restriction of the experiencing process. Yet, when he discusses self-engineering, which is sometimes confused with healthy focusing (but can actually be a mild form of self-hypnosis), he leaves open the possibility that

there is still some room for the implicit functioning of experiencing.

Self-engineering is not always futile. In fact, it can succeed exactly to the extent to which one's experiencing in the given regard functions implicitly. The trouble with will power and engineering is not, as Sullivan held and Rogers sometimes seems to assume, that there is no such thing. There is. One is not always automatically "wafted" into action or self-control. Willpower, decision, and self-engineering are often necessary. However, they cannot be effectively exerted at points where experiencing does not implicitly function. In such regards self-responses or the responses of others are required first, so that the process can be carried forward and experiencing then does implicitly function.¹⁰

If by self-engineering we simply mean the willpower and determination necessary to make an effort to focus on experiencing, then we are not really talking about a deautomatizing effect. But when dealing with the phenomenon of "talking at oneself inwardly" and being "very active and constructive, arranging and rearranging one's feelings without stopping to sense quite what they are", then, we are into an area that can rightly be called self-engineering involving a certain amount of deautomatization.

However, it would seem that this kind of self-engineering and the apparent deautomatization associated with it is only effective to the extent that the experiencing process is implicitly functioning. Therefore any shift in

¹⁰ Eugene T. Gendlin, "A Theory of Personality Change", p. 150-151.

perception may be due not to deautomatization, but to referent movement within the experiencing process. Nevertheless, the question still remains whether, or to what extent the congruent person might make use of such a technique to further his own growth. Gendlin leaves that possibility open, even though in his more developed material on the extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing he seems to indicate that any such activity can only result in a further restriction of the experiencing process.

It seems obvious, from the research material presented in this dissertation, that any simple deautomatization of perception to the extent that it implies an increase in the structure-bound manner of experiencing, is for the incongruent person already largely blocked in awareness of his experiencing, a potent source for further restricting what little self-process may be his. The question is still open, however, for the more congruent individual--although, evidence would seem to be weighted in the direction of its being a block at this level, too. However, such a conclusion could only be drawn after further research.

b) The Psychology of Gratuitous Grace vs.
the Experience of Unowned Perceptions

There is urgent need for serious research into the relationship which may exist between the unowned perceptions

that characterize structure-bound experiencing and the theological position within theistic religions which states that heightened unitive experience is always a gift from God. Such experience is not owned by or owed to the individual, but comes as something other than himself. We do not in any way intend to question the theological truth of the gratuity of grace and the gift dimension of God's self-communication. Nonetheless, insofar as this divine self-communication is psychologically experienced within a specific individual's daily life, we must ask to what extent his overbelief interpretation of the divine gift dimension of his unowned and unusual perception, may in many instances simply be applied to the loss of his sense of self that results from the blocking of his own experiencing process. The unowned dimension of experience in this instance might easily be interpreted as gratuitous divine intervention.

c) Drug-Induced Unitive Experience and
the Congruent Person

The question of drug-induced unitive experiences for the congruent person also needs further research. In all the experiments with drug usage and religious experience that I have read, I have never seen one where the congruence-incongruence variable was actively considered. Consequently, it seems to me that any conclusions drawn in this area of

research are still extremely nebulous and vague.

An interesting research project might be to select two groups of people--the one comprised of largely congruent persons, the other less congruent--and with drug usage to determine whether there was any marked difference in the descriptions of unitive consciousness, field theory perception, sense of self as organism-environment, etc. How, in other words, would a more mature and less mature individual react to the alterations in sense of self and perception of external reality associated with drug usage? And further, how would such transformations in perception affect the quality of their 'religious' consciousness?

d) The Experience of being Fully Received
and Religious Consciousness

Another area which might produce a promising contribution in the study of primary religious experience would be further research into the experience of being fully received and its relation, if any, to the God-conceptualization and quality of religious experience. What happens, for example, when an incongruent individual projects the qualities of unconditional positive regard, empathic understanding and the communication of these to the creature out onto the Creator-God? How does this affect the quality of primary religious experience, the healthy exercise of religion, and

movement toward fuller human functioning?

What happens, on the other hand, to the congruent individual whose sense of being fully received has matured to the point where he can, for example, experience being received not just from another human being but from any life-giving contact he may have with nature or the world around him? What influence does such an expanded sense of being fully received have on the God conceptualization or religious leanings of such a person? How would this kind of maturing experience influence theological formulations, liturgical celebrations, religious education, etc.?

e) The Role of the Spiritual Guide in the
Development of Mature Religious Consciousness

Although it would be difficult, a research effort to spell out some of the less obvious elements in the relationship of a disciple to his spiritual guide might produce some positive material. It would seem logical to assume that the relationship with a mature guru who truly has the best interest of his disciple in mind (and is not merely feeding his own ego with the number of his followers) would be characterized by many of the qualities described by Carl Rogers in the six characteristics of a helping relationship where constructive personality change resulted. While the attempt to isolate and identify the contribution of these less obvious

elements (less obvious than the content of spiritual advice) would be difficult, a creative researcher might find some way of doing this. I am reminded of a stimulating book, Through an Eastern Window,¹¹ by Jack Huber, a clinical psychologist at Hunter College. Dr. Huber went to Japan and underwent training in Zen from several great Roshi's in that country. Possibly in such a realistic setting a perceptive observer might be able to pick up the subtle overtones of the way in which the Zen master dealt with the disciple. The greatest difficulty, however, would be one mentioned in the earlier quote from Carl Jung--namely, that the totally different psychological conditions coming from another cultural context would be difficult to interpret accurately.

f) The Role of Emotionalism in Revivalistic Religion
and its relation to Fuller Human Functioning

There is need for further research in order to determine to what extent the emotional experience generated in revivalistic meetings can actually inhibit the possibility of more constructive contact with the feeling process. Is the emotion such an end point that it can be sought as a goal in itself? Furthermore, what personality types seem to be attracted to this expression of religion? More information

¹¹ Jack Huber, Through an Eastern Window, Bantam Books, New York, Grosset and Dunlap, 1968.

is needed to establish whether it is largely the incongruent person who is drawn to this type of revivalistic religion. If such should be the case, one might legitimately question the benefits for healthy human growth derived from such experiences.

g) Further Research toward Development of a
Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology of
Religion

Hopefully, the present dissertation will at least have established the feasibility of further investigation of the relevant contribution which both Humanistic and Transpersonal psychologists can make to the study of religion.

Perhaps one way of indicating some of the numerous avenues of investigation open for further research is to list the characteristics of what Dr. Willis Harman has referred to as the new science of subjective experience. While Dr. Harman does not restrict the scope of his list to religious questions alone, it will readily become evident that all the characteristics which he identifies as important for the study of personal knowledge and man's capacity for transcendent experience, are vital for any serious study of religion. In fact, without perhaps intending it, Dr. Harman has actually listed some of the major areas where a revitalized psychology of religion must gain competence if it is to raise the empirical study of primary religious experience to

the level of a respected, competent and accurate science.

The following list is by no means intended to be complete. However, insofar as it grows out of Dr. Harman's Humanistic and Transpersonal leanings, it hopefully represents a provocative source for future scholars who find themselves drawn in a similar direction.

1. Although we have been speaking of it as a science of subjective experience, one of its dominant characteristics will be a relaxing of the subjective-objective dichotomy. The range between perceptions shared by all or practically all, and those which are unique to one individual, will be assumed to be much more of a continuum than a sharp division between "the world out there" and what goes on "in my head."
2. Related to this will be the incorporation, in some form, of the age-old yet radical doctrine that we perceive the world and ourselves in it as we have been culturally "hypnotized" to perceive it. The typical commonsense-scientific view of reality will be considered to be a valid but partial view--a particular metaphor, so to speak. Others, such as certain religious or metaphysical views, will be considered also, and even equally, valid but more appropriate for certain areas of human experience.
3. The new science will incorporate some way of referring to the subjective experiencing of a unity in all things (the "More" of William James, the "All" of Bugental, 1965; the "divine Gound" of Aldous Huxley's The Perennial Philosophy, 1945).
4. It will include some sort of mapping or ordering of states of consciousness transcending the usual conscious awareness (Bucke's "Cosmic Consciousness," 1923; the "enlightenment" of Zen; and similar concepts).
5. It will take account of the subjective experiencing of a "higher self" and will view favorably the

development of a self-image congruent with this experience (Bugental's "I-process"; Emerson's "Over-soul"; Assagioli's "True Self", 1965; Brunton's "Over-self", 1938; the Atman of Vedanta, and so on).

6. It will allow for a much more unified view of human experiences now categorized under such diverse headings as creativity, hypnosis, mystical experience, psychedelic drugs, extra-sensory perception, psychokinesis, and related phenomena.
7. It will include a much more unified view of the processes of personal change and emergence which take place within the contexts of psychotherapy, education (in the sense of "know thyself"), and religion (as spiritual growth). This view will possibly center around the concept that personality and behavior patterns change consequent upon a change in self-image, a modification of the person's emotionally felt perception of himself and his relationship to his environment.¹²

¹² Willis W. Harman, "The New Copernican Revolution", in The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 1969, p. 25. The book references contained in the quotation are given as follows: R. Assagioli, Psychosynthesis: A Manual of Principles and Techniques, New York, Hobbs, Dorman, 1965; P. Brunton, In Quest of the Overself, New York, Dutton, 1938; R. M. Bucke, Cosmic Consciousness, New York, Dutton, 1923; J. T. F. Bugental, The Search for Authenticity, New York, Holt, 1965; A. Huxley, The Perennial Philosophy, New York, Harper, 1945.

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A good introduction to the human potentialities movement with its stress on the encouragement and release of man's innate capacity for transcendent experience, edited by the founder and president of the National Center for the Exploration of Human Potential in La Jolla, California.

Otto, Rudolf, The Idea of the Holy, trans. by John W. Harvey, New York, Oxford Press, 1968, xix-232 p.

A classic work in the field that deals with the genesis and characteristics of religious experience.

Ouspensky, P. D., In Search of the Miraculous, New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1949, xi-399 p.

A student of Gurdjieff develops his reflections on the way to the next higher stage of human consciousness.

Pahnke, Walter N., and William A. Richards, "Implications of LSD and Experimental Mysticism", in Altered States of Consciousness, Charles T. Tart, ed., New York, Wiley, 1969, p. 399-428.

Pahnke and Richards synthesize their research on psychedelic drugs with their survey of the literature of mysticism.

Perls, Frederick, Ralph F. Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, Gestalt Therapy: Excitement and Growth in the Human Personality, Delta, New York, Dell, 1965, xiii-470 p.

The founder of Gestalt Therapy here outlines the theory behind this unique approach to human growth, as well as providing a series of graduated exercises which the reader can perform in order to discover and work through various psychological blocks and impasse points within himself.

Perry, John W., "Reconstitutive Process in the Psychopathology of the Self", in Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, Vol. 96, Art. 3, Jan. 1962, p. 853-876.

An examination of development in self-imagery throughout the process of therapy. Certain images seem to predictably arise at various stages. There seems to be a spontaneous process within the psyche to re-constitute the self when this becomes necessary in the course of personal development.

Polanyi, Michael, Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958, xiv-428 p.

This work, possibly more than any other, provides a basis for showing the truly scientific nature of personal, unique, subjective experience. In one sense, it provides the epistemological foundation for the orientation of Humanistic psychology.

Rahner, Karl, "The Unity of Love of God and Love of Neighbor", in Theology Digest, Vol. 15, No. 2, 1967, p. 87-93.

A good example of the application of field theory thinking to the conceptualization of God by a contemporary theologian. A very creative and dogmatically sound effort.

Rogers, Carl R., Client-Centered Therapy, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1951, xii-560 p.

One of Dr. Rogers' major works developing his client-centered approach to psychotherapy.

-----, "Perceptual Reorganization in Client-Centered Therapy", in Perception - An Approach to Personality, Robert R. Blake and Glenn V. Ramsey, eds., New York, The Ronald Press, 1951, p. 307-327.

Some surprising clinical evidence of reorganization of visual perception and perception of others and self as it has appeared during the process of therapy. This type of material needs to be evaluated with reference to perceptual shifts resulting from contemplative meditation and deautomatization.

-----, "Persons or Science? A Philosophical Question", in The American Psychologist, Vol. 10, No. 7, July 1955, p. 267-278.

Another in the series of early articles questioning the then prevalent approaches in psychology and arguing for an orientation more in keeping with the idiographic, Humanistic approach.

-----, "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change", in The Journal of Consulting Psychology, Vol. 21, No. 2, April 1957, p. 95-103.

An extremely clear and precise statement of the fundamental principles and dynamics operative in client-centered therapy. Dr. Rogers lists six necessary and sufficient conditions for successful growth in therapy (or outside of it) and also spells out several significant omissions from his list with his reasons for not including them. A vital and important position paper.

-----, "Significant Trends in the Client-Centered Orientation", in Progress in Clinical Psychology, Lawrence E. Abt and Bernard F. Riess, eds., New York, Grune and Stratton, 1960, p. 85-99.

A position paper by Rogers written in the late fifties suggesting the important methodological problems that must be surmounted in attempts to understand various aspects of the therapeutic process. The early formulation of theory and its ultimate reformulation and measurement is discussed.

-----, On Becoming a Person, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1961, x-420 p.

Considered by many to be Dr. Rogers' major work.

-----, "The Interpersonal Relationship: The Core of Guidance", in The Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 32, No. 4, Fall, 1962, p. 416-429.

This article discusses the fundamental concepts of congruence, empathy, positive regard and the client's perception of these elements in the relationship with the counselor. There is some discussion of the fundamental philosophy involved in this approach and empirical studies to verify it.

-----, "Toward a Modern Approach to Values: The Valuing Process in the Mature Person", in The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 68, No. 2, 1964, p. 160-167.

A clear description of how values are derived either from closeness to the organism and its process of experiencing or through introjection that results in ultimate self-alienation. Change in the valuing process is described and the truly social and moral dimension of values derived from the experiencing organism is examined. A fundamental paper on the importance of the experiencing process.

-----, "Some Questions and Challenges Facing a Humanistic Psychology", in The Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1965, p. 1-5.

Another in the series of early articles attempting to spell out the precise questions which the new orientation in psychology should be prepared to squarely face and seek answers to.

-----, "Some Thoughts Regarding the Current Philosophy of the Behavioral Sciences", in The Journal of Humanistic Psychology, Vol. 5, No. 2, Fall, 1965, p. 182-194.

An exceptionally fine article by Rogers describing the controversy within himself between the scientist and the person who as therapist has lived deeply in human relationships. A clear statement of the values of science and person, the importance of a sense for pattern and the ability to test and verify it. A basic article on values--scientific, personalistic, humanistic.

-----, "Toward a Science of the Person", in Readings in Humanistic Psychology, Miles Vich and Tony Sutich, eds., New York, MacMillan (The Free Press), 1969, p. 21-49.

A discussion of various ways of knowing and their implications for science and psychology.

-----, Alan M. Walker and Richard A. Rablen, "Development of a Scale to Measure Process Changes in Psychotherapy", in The Journal of Clinical Psychology, Vol. 16, No. 1, Jan. 1960, p. 79-85.

Royce, Joseph R., "Metaphoric Knowledge and Humanistic Psychology", in Challenges of Humanistic Psychology, James F. T. Bugental, ed., New York, McGraw Hill, 1967, p. 21-28.

Another article on different ways of knowing, the cognitive processes involved and their corresponding epistemologies--rationalism, metaphorism and empiricism. All of this is related to the emergence of Humanistic psychology and includes discussion of the implications of this material for the psychology of religion.

Silverman, Julian, "A Paradigm for the Study of Altered States of Consciousness", in The British Journal of Psychiatry, Vol. 114, 1968, p. 1201-1218.

An article which can be profitably read in conjunction with the earlier one listed under the name of Arnold Ludwig.

Stace, W. T., Mysticism and Philosophy, London, MacMillan, 1961, 349 p.

A thoughtful work on the nature of mystical consciousness by an eminent scholar. One section deals directly with the universal core of mysticism--unitive experience.

Strunk, Orlo, Jr., A Redefinition of the Psychology of Religion: with Special Reference to Certain Psychological Theories of Gordon Allport, Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, presented to the Graduate School of Boston University, 1957, 171 p.

As mentioned earlier, the bibliography together with various annotations and descriptions in earlier chapters make this an extremely valuable work for the student in this area of research. The development of Allport's contribution especially his emphasis on an idiographic approach, makes a substantial contribution to revitalizing the psychology of religion.

-----, Mature Religion: A Psychological Study, New York, Abingdon Press, 1965, 160 p.

A study of religious maturity and the meaning of religion through inspection of the writings of various personality theorists: Freud, Jung, Fromm, James, Allport, and Frankl. This is followed by Strunk's synthesis of the material plus his own synthetic definition of religious maturity.

-----, "Humanistic Religious Psychology", in The Psychology of Religion: Historical and Interpretive Readings, Orlo Strunk, Jr., ed., New York, Abingdon Press, 1971, p. 116-122. The article also appeared in the Journal of Pastoral Care, Vol. 24, 1970, p. 90-97.

One of Strunk's more recent articles in which he discusses the implications of the relatively new Humanistic orientation in psychology for the study of religion.

-----, editor, The Psychology of Religion: Historical and Interpretive Readings, New York, Abingdon Press, 1971, 152 p.

A representative series of articles on the psychology of religion as it has developed in North America. Various trends are discussed. The bibliography which is updated from Strunk's thesis is extremely useful for the serious student pursuing research in the psychology of religion.

Sullivan, John J., "Two Psychologies and the Study of Religion", in The Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1962, p. 155-164.

Sullivan states that while the study of religious behavior has advanced, the study of religious experience will depend upon how clearly we can define the general research problems of the study of inner life and how quickly we can develop a methodology to handle these problems. His reflections are largely on behaviorism and psychoanalysis.

Sunden, Hjalmar, "Psychology of Religion - An Orientation", in Temenos (Studies in Comparative Religion Presented by Scholars in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden), Vol. 6, 1970, p. 142-149.

This article forms an interesting prelude to the present dissertation. At one point Sunden notes: "In different religious traditions there exist possibilities of de-automatizing the neural dispositions which enable man to size up a normal world of things, and automatizing methods permitting new perceptual organizations and opportunities. I think it desirable that psychologists of religion should pay more attention to such problems of organization."

Sutich, Anthony J., "Some Considerations Regarding Transpersonal Psychology", in The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1969, p. 11-20.

The original founder and editor of the Journal of Humanistic Psychology, and now founding editor of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology here spells out some of the initially recognized distinctions between the two approaches.

Tart, Charles T., ed., Altered States of Consciousness, New York, Wiley, 1969, 575 p.

A basic work for those interested in this area of research. The book includes general works on altered states of consciousness as well as specific articles on dreams, hypnosis, the hypnogogic state, and states of consciousness associated with the use of major and minor drugs.

Teilhard De Chardin, Pierre, The Phenomenon of Man, London, Collins, 1960, 320 p.

Considered to be Teilhard De Chardin's major work. Part IV titled "Survival" is especially important for the field theory, organism-environment understanding of man in the world.

-----, The Future of Man, New York, Harper and Row, 1964, 319 p.

Nearly all the works of De Chardin are important because of the way in which they incorporate a field theory view of reality into nearly everything that is said.

Underhill, Evelyn, Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness, New York, Dutton, 1961, xviii-519 p.

A classic, sympathetic, and scholarly study of the subject. Miss Underhill's presentation departs from William James' on several points and helps bring balance to some of the material which he stresses.

Wapnick, Kenneth, "Mysticism and Schizophrenia", in The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 1969, p. 46-67.

An interesting comparison of the mystic and schizophrenic states together with discussion of common experiences as well as differences. The article is useful for understanding some of the perceptual transformations common to both groups.

Watts, Alan, The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are, New York, Pantheon Books, 1966, x-146 p.

An unusual and challenging book which forces the reader to re-evaluate many of his subject-object categories and habitual modes of dividing his experience and arranging or constructing reality.

-----, Beyond Theology: The Art of Godmanship, Meridian, New York, World Publishing, 1967, xiii-236 p.

Whyte, Lancelot Law, The Next Development in Man, Mentor, New York, New American Library, 1962, 254 p.

A seminal work frequently referred to by the Humanistic group in psychology. His reflections on the emergence of unitary man and unitary consciousness stress a field theory point of view.

Wood, Barry, The Magnificent Frolic, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1970, 223 p.

A readable reflection on contemporary Christian experience which attempts to work with man's changing sense of self as it moves in the direction of greater field-theory awareness. The implications of a developing sense of self as organism-environment for the Christian religion are explored.

APPENDIX 1

ABSTRACT OF

Toward a Humanistic-Transpersonal Psychology of Religion

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Purpose and Relevance of the Study

The purpose of the dissertation is (1) to examine the phenomenon of unitive consciousness as an important element of primary religious experience in order to better understand some of the psychological and perceptual dynamics involved in such an experience, and (2) to determine whether any criteria can be established for judging when the unitive perceptions associated with primary religious experience actually contribute to what Dr. Carl Rogers has described as fuller human functioning. This second goal also involves study of the conditions under which various alterations in consciousness and what are interpreted as unitive experiences seem to represent merely unusual perceptual transformations that do not necessarily contribute positively to the process of constructive personality change. It is hoped during the course of the investigation that drawing on the relatively new but potentially rich resources now becoming available in Humanistic and Transpersonal psychology will give indication of the

¹ Peter A. Campbell, doctoral thesis presented to the Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa, Ontario, 1972, v-401 p.

contribution which these two orientations can make to future development of the psychology of religion.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that contemporary interest in altering states of consciousness is now at an all-time high in our society. This has led many people to experiment with various methods such as zen, yoga, transcendental meditation, ascetical practices and drug usage in order to expand consciousness, resolve the so-called subject-object dichotomy, and achieve some form of heightened unitive experience. The dissertation represents an attempt to synthesize theoretical and practical material regarding the nature and development of unitive consciousness so that the psychologist of religion may better understand this important phenomenon. It attempts to provide some criteria for determining when fuller human functioning is more likely to result from such experience and when the use of various techniques for altering consciousness may actually impede constructive personality change and greater integration.

Method and Procedure

Recognizing that the intuition of significant pattern is an important moment in the process of scientific investigation, the first chapter seeks to trace the formulation of the dissertation hypothesis as it gradually emerged from what at first appeared as seemingly disparate, unrelated

pieces of data. Since Humanistic psychology stresses the importance of an initial intuitive sense for pattern which guides subsequent investigation and efforts at verification, it is important that any research project representing this orientation in psychology should be considered with reference to its earlier origins. Hence, the first chapter of this dissertation is not only informational as to the specific thesis topic, but also lays an important methodological foundation for the scientific investigation of religious phenomena insofar as such research stems from a Humanistic orientation. The scientist must be aware of what has led him to the present project which engages his energy and attention. He must keep in touch with how he personally responds to the data as he gets close to it, how the data becomes a part of him, and how, in a sense, any synthesis which results includes a good deal of the researcher himself. In this sense, science is the scientist and not simply a method of analysis and verification. An adequate report of research conclusions can only make sense in the light of this more complete dimension of the over-all research project.

The second chapter develops the notion of unitive consciousness, establishes it as constituting the core of primary religious experience, especially within mystic literature, and presents a synthesis of several contemporary explanations of this type of awareness drawn from both religious

and non-religious sources. The implications of a sense of self as organism-environment and the quality of perception associated with a field-theory approach to contacting reality are discussed insofar as they shed light on the nature and development of unitive consciousness.

The third chapter deals with production of altered states of consciousness and the dynamics of deautomatization which operate when habitual perceptual patterns are disrupted. The deautomatizing effect of contemplative meditation, various ascetical practices and life-styles, and drug usage are considered, together with the way in which employment of such techniques can result in a degree of de-differentiation easily interpreted as unitive experience.

The fourth chapter describes the nature and dynamics of fuller human functioning and the organismic potential for unitive consciousness associated with it insofar as a person is moving in the direction of greater congruence with the experiencing process as described by Dr. Carl Rogers and Dr. Eugene T. Gendlin. The nature of congruence and the experiencing process are examined, together with the increased capacity for unitive awareness that arises with forward movement of experiencing. It is just such forward movement in the process of feeling or experiencing which leads to fuller human functioning.

A critical evaluation of deautomatization is then offered. The techniques deliberately employed to supposedly break various ingrained perceptual constancies interpreted as blocking the emergence of unitive consciousness are shown to also contain the negative potential for furthering what is called a structure-bound manner of experiencing. While the use of such techniques may result in considerable experience of de-differentiation and loss of self which easily lends itself to be interpreted as unitive experience, the mechanics of these techniques would appear to achieve their perceptual shifts not through forward movement of the experiencing process but rather by further restricting it. Thus, a form of unitive consciousness can be achieved, apparently at the expense of fuller human functioning.

Research Conclusions

The thesis concludes that altered states of consciousness, frequently interpreted as manifestations of unitive awareness, which can arise as a result of employing various techniques for deautomatization within a religious context-- e.g. contemplative meditation, asceticism and drug usage-- can often mimic the perceptual shifts and unitive consciousness associated with movement toward congruence and constructive personality change, but without this change actually occurring. It would seem that there is no necessary connection

between operation of the mechanics of deautomatization and what Rogers and Gendlin refer to as forward movement of the experiencing process. Moreover, there seems to be every indication that the indiscriminate use of deautomatizing techniques, especially when employed by less congruent persons, actually leads toward an extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing which can inhibit movement toward fuller human functioning. A significant criterion, therefore, for determining the extent to which any given unitive perception contributes to fuller human functioning would be its ability to enable a person to achieve greater congruence and further forward movement of the experiencing process rather than inducing a more extreme structure-bound manner of experiencing.