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MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES AND SCIENTIFIC METHOD

(UNABRIGDED VERSION OF A DOCTORIAL THESIS)

A study of the possibility of identifying a "mystical" experience by a scientific method, with special reference to the theory of Walter T Stace

ABSTRACT

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A necessary condition for being able to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method is to solve the following problems:

(a) We must explicitly present and argue for a theory of meaning that allows us to draw conclusions from mystical sentences about the experience in question. No such theory exists today. Stace has not applied his referential theory to mystical language, still less argued that a referential theory is the one to be selected in preference to other alternatives.

(b) We must show that mystical sentences are actually used for describing mystical experiences. The reasons Stace provides are untenable. None of the mystical sentences that Stace cites functions descriptively. But arguments put forward by Troy Organ and Stace in his intermediate period against the logical possibility of mystical sentences functioning descriptively are also untenable.

(c) We must provide a satisfactory explanation of what the mystics mean by saying that the experience is ineffable. Nine different explanations have been suggested. None of them is unobjectionable. The reasons that Stace puts forward in support of his explanation that the mystical experience is not really ineffable are untenable. In none of the mystical utterances that Stace cites does the mystic use the word "ineffable" in the way Stace recommends. None of the nine explanations can, however, be dismissed definitively. Closer examination of the mystical utterances that Stace uses, from twenty-eight mystics, shows that different mystics, or even the same mystics, use the expression "ineffable", in different ways in different linguistic contexts. It is also possible to find utterances in which the sentences function descriptively with regard to the non-content-related properties of the experience, while the content of the experience is logically ineffable. I have found no support for the idea that the ineffability of the experience renders its identification logically impossible.

The conclusion of my investigation is that there are no logical reasons why identification should be impossible. On the other hand, there is no theory in existence today that has shown that it is possible to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method.

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Introduction

The Problem

The problem that I am going to investigate is whether it is possible, by a scientific method, to identify what is usually designated within this field of research as a "mystical" experience.

I am of the opinion that, if we are to be able to defend the possibility of stating the properties of a mystical experience using a scientific method, a necessary condition is to present arguments in favour of a theory of language that solves the following problems in a satisfactory manner:

(a) The problem of meaning. We have to clarify the relationship between mystical words/sentences and what they express, i.e. investigate whether there is any relationship between mystical expression, on the one hand, and mystical experiences, on the other, so that by means of the mystical expression we can reach some conclusion about the properties of the experience in question. If a relationship of this kind cannot be found, then it is logically impossible, and thereby impossible using a scientific method, to identify a mystical experience.

(b) The problem of function. We have to investigate the semantic functions of mystical language so as to discover whether the mystical sentences function descriptively, i.e. are actually used to describe properties of mystical experiences. If the mystical sentences do not function descriptively, then it is logically impossible, and thereby impossible using a scientific method, to identify a mystical experience.

(c) The problem of ineffability. Mystics have often claimed that their experiences are ineffable. What does the mystic mean by the expression "ineffable"? If the mystics mean that the experiences are, for example, *absolutely* ineffable, then it is logically impossible, and thereby impossible using a scientific method, to identify a mystical experience.

It is not sufficient to solve the three subordinate problems in the way outlined above. We also have to demonstrate that the theory in question is the one we should prefer to rival theories.

As far as I know, Walter T Stace is the only philosopher who has tried to solve these problems. Stace does not discuss the problem of identification explicitly, but his view of mystical language and the method he uses to interpret mystical texts imply that identification by a scientific method is possible. I shall therefore have his theory as a starting-point when discussing the main problem. Stace's solution to the three subordinate problems is briefly as follows:

(i) The meaning of mystical words is to refer to the mystical experience, that is to say, mystical words are names of properties of the mystical experience. It is thus possible to identify a mystical experience using a scientific method by analysing the mystical words/sentences. Thus Stace adopts what is known as a *referential* theory of meaning to explain the meaning of mystical words/sentences.

(ii) An investigation of how mystical sentences actually function shows that there are mystical sentences that have the same characteristics as descriptive ones. Mystical sentences are used to describe properties of mystical experiences. As there are mystical sentences that function descriptively, it is possible to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method.

(iii) Mystical experiences are not ineffable. As mystical experiences, in contrast to non-mystical ordinary experiences, do not follow the laws of logic, the mystic according to Stace becomes confused when attempting to describe his experience. The mystic believes that the mystical experience is ineffable. As the mystical experience is not ineffable in the strict sense, we need not question the result of the investigation of the semantic function of mystical sentences, i.e. that mystical sentences are used to describe properties of the mystical experience. It is therefore possible to identify mystical experiences using a scientific method.

Walter T Stace

Stace was born in London in 1886. In 1908 he graduated from Trinity College, Dublin and between 1910 and 1932 he was employed in the British Civil Service in Ceylon. From 1932 to 1955 he taught philosophy at Princeton University. Stace died in 1967.

Stace has written a long series of books and articles on mysticism. It appears to me that his view of the relationship between mystical experiences, on the one hand, and mystical language, on the other, changed over the years, in the way described below.

In the earlier period, represented by the article "Metaphysics and Meaning" (1935), Stace, to be sure, accepts a type of referential theory of meaning, but claims nevertheless that it is impossible to identify a mystical experience.

His view during the intermediate period is to be found in "Naturalism and Religion" (1949), "Time and Eternity" (1952), "Religion and the Modern Mind" (1952) in "Oriental Conceptions of Detachment and Enlightenment" (1952) and "Mysticism and Human Reason' (1955). Stace then claimed that the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable, and that mystical words do not refer to the mystical experience. So during this period, too, the possibility of identification is denied, but for other reasons.

The following works were produced during his later period: "Mysticism and Philosophy" (1960), "The Teachings of the Mystics" (1960), "The Mystical Form of Western Spirituality" (1962), "The Psychology of Mysticisrn" (1967) <l> and "The Philosophy of Mysticism" (1967). <2> Stace still retains his referential theory, but changes his conception of the semantic functions of mystical sentences and his view of the phenomenon of ineffability. He claims that mystical sentences function descriptively, and that the mystical experience is not ineffable, thereby implying that it is possible to identify a mystical experience using a scientific method.

Stace is undoubtedly the philosopher that has had the greatest influence on research on mysticism within the field of philosophy. Many philosophers have adopted his definition of the concept of mystical experience. A large number of dissertations have been devoted to his theories about the status of mystical experiences in connection with the theory of knowledge and with ontology.

Reasons for Undertaking the Investigation

One of the reasons for starting an investigation of the possibility of identifying the mystical experience was already mentioned in the previous section. It is not self-evident that identification is logically possible. My problem is, however, of great relevance to other problems within research into mysticism. Within the theory of knowledge, for instance, the mystical experience is often used as a criterion of knowledge. This presupposes that identification of the experience is logically possible. To justify the claims of mystical knowledge, studies of the possibility of identifying a mystical experience can therefore be of fundamental importance.

The same applies to the ontological question, that is, whether the object that mystics claim to gain knowledge of in the mystical experience, often named "God", "Brahman", "The One" etc., exists in reality, and if the mystical experiences can provide us with knowledge of the nature of that reality. Theories that, for example, attempt to prove the reasonableness of God's existence by referring to the fact that mystical experiences have certain characteristic properties, besides being an experience of God, lose much of their strength if it is logically impossible to identify the mystical experience.

The much debated question of the relationship between the mystic's experience, on the one hand, and his interpretations of the experience, on the other, is also logically dependent on the possibility of identification.

If the experience cannot be identified, it is impossible to determine this relationship and to decide what theory is preferable.

Another problem concerns mysticism and ethics. There are some who claim that mystical experiences give rise to a specific view of what is right and wrong, good and evil, etc. To the extent that these theories are based on the properties of the mystical experience, my investigation is also of relevance to this field of research.

The problem of identification also concerns questions of definition and areas connected with them. Here I am chiefly thinking of the definitions that are based on properties of the mystical experience, comparisons between different experiences within mysticism/drug mysticism, and classifications of mystical experiences. We cannot, for instance, compare two experiences that we have not been able to identify.

The main problem may also be relevant to non-behaviouristic explanative psychology. To explain the origin of a mystical experience, the psychologist has to be able to identify that experience.

Finally, no researcher has investigated the problem of identification previously. Noone, as far as I know, has even recognised it as a problem. That the problem is worth studying has, however, already been made clear. The problem is of fundamental importance within research into mysticism, not only to philosophers of religion, but also to anthropologists, and historians, phenomenologists and psychologists of religion.

The Current State of Research

Unfortunately, no previous research exists in this problem area. By approaching the main problem by way of three subordinate problems, however, my investigation will enter problem areas that are already known. As I shall present the theories dealing with each problem in specific chapters, I shall not go into further details here.

Material

The material consists of theories on mystical experiences put forward by philosophers within the analytical tradition. I have limited myself to treating the theories within semantics, logics, the theory of knowledge, etc., that concern "mystical" questions and that are relevant to the question of whether it is possible to identify a mystical experience using a scientific method.

Aim

The aim of my investigation is:

(a) to give an account of, clarify and classify Stace's later theory and alternatives to it in the material.
(b) to critically examine Stace's later theory and the alternatives.
(c) to argue for the theory that I consider to be preferable, on the basis on the result in (b).
(d) to evaluate Stace's solution to the problem of identification on the basis of the result in (c).

Method

The aim of my investigation will be achieved by methods that are normal within what is usually called "analytical" philosophy, and they include the following:

(a) An interpretation of central sentences in the material. I shall use the following methods of interpretation:

1 .That sentence *S1* is a *contextual interpretation* of sentence S, is the same as that *S1* expresses the same proposition/means the same as S, does in the linguistic context K, and that S, renders any theory the sender may have maximally consistent. <3>

Comments

Same proposition and *means the same.* The expressions "same proposition" and "means the same" mean that it is impossible for a person to accept what *S2* expresses and at the same time repudiate what S1 expresses.

Maximally consistent. I assume that philosophers attempt to present their theories in a manner that is as logically consistent as possible. Where two interpretations are possible, I shall therefore choose the one that is most consistent.

11. In some cases of interpretation I am forced to state what the author means more precisely. The author has perhaps expressed himself unclearly or vaguely, or used ambiguous terms. I then express the interpretation I choose more clearly by making the sentence in question less vague and/or ambiguous. Thus:

That S1 is a *precization* of S, is the same as that S1 expresses the same proposition/means the same as S does in K, and that S1 renders any theory the sender may have maximally consistent and less vague/ambiguous.

111. I shall also make use of what I call *implicative interpretation.* This means that I suggest an interpretation of a sentence or a text that is not explicitly supported by the text but which I believe is the logical consequence of the author's utterance. Thus:

That S1 is an *implicative interpretation* is the same as that S1 is a proposition that is a logical consequence of that which is expressed in K and that S1 renders the sender's theory maximally consistent.

(b)   An investigation of the logical relationships between central sentences in the material and a clarification of the implicit theoretical prerequisites of the theories, when these are relevant to the problem under discussion.

(c)   An investigation of the validity of the arguments in the material and what theories may be considered preferable. A valid argument is one that is true/probable and relevant. A relevant argument is one that, alone or with other true/probable propositions inductively or deductively leads to the thesis that the argument should support.

To be able to determine which or what of the rival theories that in the present state of research are to be preferred, I shall first and foremost make use of the following criteria:

(a)   Clarity. The central theses of the theory have to be unambiguous and precise.

(b)   Relevance. The theory has to describe/explain the phenomenon it aims to describe/explain.

(c)   Consistency. The theory should be free from logical contradictions.

(d)   Certainty. The theory should be based on as small a number of unproved assumptions as possible.

(e). Completeness. In its description/explanation a theory should comprise as many phenomena as possible within its specific area.

Analytical Apparatus

Hitherto I have used terms such as "mystic", "mystical experience", "identify", etc. without explicitly stating their meaning in detail. Now that I am about to discuss the meaning, function, etc. of mystical sentences and the possibility of identifying mystical experiences, I need to define certain central concepts.

The reason for defining the concepts *mystic, mystical experience,* etc. is that, unfortunately, there is no common apparatus of concepts within research into mysticism. Despite this, philosophers often discuss, for instance, the mystical language or mystical knowledge without stating what is meant by the expressions "mystic" and "mystical experience". To the extent that philosophers do provide definitions, these vary from one philosopher to another. Problems can therefore arise when I wish to compare different theories, which is another reason why I need a common point of departure. A number of stipulative definitions follow below:

(a) "mystical experience". As mentioned earlier, the possibility of defining a mystical experience logically presupposes the possibility of identifying the same. At the same time, however, we have to know *something* about the type of experience that I say should be identified. I have therefore tried to delimit what a mystical experience is by stating its relationship with ordinary perception, in the following way:

mystical experience = def an experience characterized by the following properties:

lack of

I.	sensory perception
II.	sense of space
III.	sense of time
IV.	relationship between subject and object
V.	thoughts.

Few philosophers would regard my definition as sufficiently precise, but it is in my view sufficiently delimiting for the purpose of my investigation. I have not found anything either that would indicate that the majority of the philosophers that I examine would not agree with me that the above definition points, if incompletely, to *one* type of mystical experience.

Included in the concept of mystical experience is that the experience has some specific content-related properties. I have, however, chosen not to specify these, as a comparison of different theories would then be more difficult to carry out. Different philosophers have specified different content-related properties. Moreover, as far as the purpose of my study is concerned, I do not consider it necessary to specify these properties. In the theories presented, no distinction is made between the mystical experience as such and its content. I shall, however, return to this question in Chapter 4, as this distinction is important to the discussion of the main problem.

(b) "mystic" = def a person who is regarded as having had a mystical experience <4>

(c) "mystical text" = def a text written/dictated by a mystic

(d) "mystical language" = def the language that mystical texts consist of about to discuss the meaning, function, etc. of mystical sentences and the possibility of identifying mystical experiences

(e) "mystical words/concepts/sentences/utterances" = def words/concepts/ sentences/utterances to be found in mystical language

(f) "context". I shall distinguish between two types of contexts, *linguistic* and *non-linguistic*. *By linguistic context* is meant not only the section or chapter in which the mystical utterance is to be found, but the complete apparatus of concepts that the mystic in question has made use of in all his works. With the concept *non-linguistic context* I refer to biographical data, cultural, social, economic conditions etc.

(g) "possible to study by a scientific method". The question "What is scientific method?" has been debated for hundreds of years. It is naturally not my task to provide an exhaustive answer to this question here. It is sufficient for the purpose of my investigation to point out one prerequisite that I think all sciences are based on, namely *communicability. By communicability* is meant here not only that it should be possible for the researcher at least to communicate the results of his research to other researchers within the same paradigm. I refer primarily to the communicability of the *phenomenon.* To be able to study the phenomenon scientifically, it is necessary to be able to describe it in a language. The expression "possible to study by a scientific method" therefore refers primarily to the possibility of such a description of the phenomenon.

(h) "identify" = def to determine the properties of an entity with the help of an apparatus of concepts. As my problem concerns the identification of mystical experiences, I refer here to the determination of the properties of a mystical experience by means of a scientific method. The possibility of determining the properties of an experience with the help of, for instance, intuition, therefore, does not fit in with my definition of "to identify".<5>

In the preamble to each chapter I shall supplement my analytical apparatus with concepts specific to that and succeeding chapters.

A Review of the Chapters

The main problem, as mentioned previously, will be approached by dividing it into three subordinate ones: the problem of the meaning of mystical words/sentences, the problem of function and the problem of ineffability. These three problems will be treated chapter by chapter in this order. Finally, in chapter 4 I shall test all the theories on the basis of an analysis of certain selected mystical texts and against the background of the results in chapters 1-3. I shall follow the same pattern in the first three chapters. I shall begin by presenting the problem, the material and the apparatus of concepts that I shall employ. Then I shall give an account of the theories that deal with the problem in question. The first of the theories presented will be that of the later Stace. The consequences of accepting Stace's theory as far as the question of identification is concerned are made clear, after which Stace's theory is examined. First of all I discuss any support that may exist for the theory, then I examine the supporting arguments included in the theory and explicitly stated by Stace. The analysis is concluded with other criticism of the theory. This is followed by a presentation of the alternative theories that are available to us. The procedure here is identical with that used for dealing with Stace's theory. At the end of each chapter I sum up the results of the analysis and discuss the implications for the question of identification.

Notes

1. Stace has not stated when this article was written but he has told us he held a lecture based on this article in 1961. The article was first published in 1967. See 1967a, p viii.
2. Stace has implicitly stated that this article was written in 1960 in Stace 1967 a, pp vii-viii.
3. My definition of "contextual interpretation" excludes any form of intentional interpretation, i.e. an interpretation that aims at finding out what the author had in mind when writing his work. To be able to discover the author's intentions we have to know a great deal about his opinions, frame of concepts, frame of reference, character, interests and the social, economic and cultural conditions under which he lived. But even if we know all this we cannot claim to be able to interpret the utterance of the author "intentionally" for the following reasons: I. It is possible that the author had intentions that he was not

aware of himself. II. It may be difficult for the author to formulate his intentions, especially if much time has elapsed since the work was written. III. Even if the author is able to give an account of his intentions, he could be wrong. Maybe the author has reasons for not stating his intentions. The main problem in trying to interpret a text intentionally is that we have no criteria that enables us to decide whether we have succeeding in finding out the author's intentions or not.

4. In this study I will use the expression "he" and not "he/she". This does not imply that I have discriminated against female mystics.

5. It could be limiting only to treat theories that discuss the possibility of identifying a mystical experience by analysing mystical texts. The reason is that I have found no better method. It has been suggested that the researcher could identify the properties of mystical experiences through psychological criteria or through mystical experiences of his own. However, to avoid breaking the rule of communication mentioned above, the scientist must, sooner or later, formulate the mystical experience in language. After all, words are the means by which we can communicate our experiences to others, at least if we claim to be scientists. See Thorsen 1983, p 185 note 20 and also Staal 1975, p 103.

1. The Meaning of Mystical Words and Sentences

The Problem

One of the problems that Stace had to solve to enable the identification of mystical experiences by a scientific method was the problem of meaning. In this chapter I shall deal with the meaning of words/sentences in general and the meaning of mystical words/sentences in particular. Very briefly, the problem can be expressed as follows: We are all capable of constructing and understanding sentences that we have never come across before. It is not sufficient to refer to grammatical rules with whose help we construct the sentences to explain this process. What significance is there in the fact that a sequence of signs has a meaning? What makes *one* combination of signs/characters meaningful and another not?

The problem of meaning is one that has been discussed throughout the history of philosophy. One solution proposed has been that words stand for ideas in the sender's consciousness, another is that meaning should be analysed in terms of stimulus/response. A later Wittgensteinian may claim that meaning consists in the use of words and sentences in the language. Finally, philosophers have asserted that words refer to, point out, something in "the world". Stace has chosen the last theory. According to this theory, there exists a relationship between linguistic expressions and experiences. In this theory the words stand for properties of the experience, for instance, describe properties of the mystical experience. It is therefore possible to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method.

Material

The material in this problem area is, to say the least, scanty. It is limited to two articles, one by Ronald Burr and the other by Robert Hoffmann, both of whom recommend a theory of meaning that is inspired by the later Wittgensteinian school, applied to mystical language. Neither Burr nor Hoffman, however, have explicitly discussed the problem of identification. Consequently, one of the tasks in this chapter is to explain the implications of accepting Burr's/ Hoffman's theories as far as the main problem is concerned. Acceptance of a theory of use does not logically enable an identification of mystical experiences, and hence precludes the use of a scientific method. No theory exists today that explains the meaning of mystical words/sentences in such a way that identification is logically or scientifically possible. I do not wish to content myself with just stating the fact, however. Even if Stace has not explicitly dealt with the meaning of mystical words/sentences, he implicitly assumes a s.c. *referential theory of meaning,* a theory that has many supporters. As Stace claims that identification of mystical experiences can be performed scientifically, I believe that it is appropriate to attempt to reconstruct Stace's theory of meaning and to suggest an application to mystical language. Owing to the fact that Stace's view of mystical language altered over the years, I shall present three different applications of the theory.

Analytical Apparatus

To be able to reconstruct Stace's referential theory of meaning and to be able to elucidate the ideas of Burr and Hoffman, I shall use the apparatus of concepts that William P Alston presented in his classic work *Philosophy of Language* (1964) <1>. 1 should have preferred Alston to be more precise in his presentation of the said theory of meaning by analysing the characteristic properties in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions instead of stating what he calls "basic features". In addition, Alston's characterization of the referential theory is rather uncomplicated. I believe, however, that Alston's apparatus of concepts is sufficiently exact for the purposes of my investigation.

To clarify what Wittgenstein meant by his criticism of private language, I shall also make use of Norman Malcolm's *Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations (1954).*

I have taken the liberty of using only those concepts in the above works that are relevant to the discussion of the main problem.

To be able to clarify Stace's view of mystical language, it is necessary to use the concept *private language,* as Stace's theory of meaning is based on the possibility of constructing such a language. By the term *private language, 1* shall mean the following:

I.   P has an experience, PEI, at the time t1.
II.   PE1 is introspectively distinguishable to P at t1.
III.   At t1 P connects PE1 with W, which is a name for PE1
IV.   P has an experience, PE2, at t1 + 2
V.   PE2 is introspectively distinguishable to P at t1+ 2.
VI.   P remembers PE1 at t1 + 3
VII.   At t1 + 4 P compares PE2 with the memory of PE1, PE3.
VIII. At t1 + 5 P discovers that PE3 and PE2 are similar to each other.
IX.   At t1 + 6 P draws the conclusion that, on the basis of the comparison between PE3 and PE2, it is also correct to designate PE2 as W.
X.   In the situation L at t 1 + 7 P utters S, which contains W, which is a name for PE3 and PE2.

Procedure

The presentation of the theory in question will be performed in the same way. After describing, in the form of theses, what characterizes the theory as Alston presented it, I shall outline a suggestion as to the application of the theory to mystical language. This is followed by a discussion of the implications of this application for the problem of identification. The presentation ends with a critical examination of the theory.

After dealing with the two theories of meaning, I shall discuss the results I have reached and their significance with regard to the main problem.

1. 1. The Referential Theory and Its Application to Mystical Language

1.1.1 Characteristic Properties of a Referential Theory

(i)   The person P utters sentence S, which contains the words W1… Wn.

(ii)   The meaning of W consists in either (a) referring to a referent, E, or (b) referring to a relationship between W and E. <2>

The expression "refer" alludes to the fact that W stands for, points out or designates something extralinguistic. The word "Fido" stands, for instance, for the dog Fido in the "world". Meaning here is identical with the referent, i.e. identical with that which is pointed out, and constitutes what Alston calls a "naive" version of the referential theory. A problem with the naive version, according to Alston, is that two words with different meanings cannot point to the same referent. <3> The expressions "Morning Star" and "Evening Star" have different meanings but have the same referent, namely, the planet Venus.

To circumvent this problem Alston presents what he calls a more "sophisticated" version of the theory. In this version, words refer to a relationship between W and E. <4> What this relationship consists in is, however, unclear, says Alston. So much is clear, however, that W is used in S to indicate to the receiver that W is about E. <5>

Proper names, abstract nouns, expressions in which a concrete noun is combined with a definite/indefinite article or a demonstrative pronoun and concrete nouns in the plural are examples of words/expressions that have referents in the more sophisticated version of the referential theory. <6>

(iii)   The person Q understands W when Q realises that W is referring to E.

This is an implicative interpretation of Alston's argument and has been included because of its relevance to the discussion of the main problem.

(iv)   P and Q are making use of a private language. <7>

1. 1. 2. The Referential Theory of Walter T Stace

With Alston's and my own apparatus of concepts as a point of departure, including my definition of the concept of private language, a reconstruction of Stace's referential theory may appear as follows:

(i)   P has PE1 at t1.
(ii)   PE1 is introspectively distinguishable to P at t1. <8>
(iii)   At ti + 1 P associates PE1 with W, which is a name for PE1,

Stace's central thesis is that meaning is connected with people's experiences. He writes:

"All verbal expressions, whether they consist in single terms or in complete sentences, must if they are to possess cognitive meaning or significance, either refer to some specific but unanalysable experiential datum, or be amenable to a process of analysis the end terms of which will be such experiential data." <9>

Stace does not accept thesis (iv), however. According to him, a concept first arises when several experiences show the same "structural" properties (see below). That W is not a name for PE1 deviates, it is true, from my way of defining the concept of private language, but this difference does not imply that Stace did not assume the possibility of such a language. W still stands, as we shall see, for something private, namely the structural similarity between experiences.

(iv) P has PE2 at tl + 2
(v) PE2 is introspectively distinguishable to P at tl + 2
(vi) P remembers PE1 at tl + 3
(vii) P compares PE2 at tl + 4 with the memory of PEI, PE3
(viii) At tl + 5 P discovers that PE3 and PE2 have the same structure.
(ix) At tl + 6 on the basis of the comparison between PE3 and PE2, P draws the conclusion that the structural identity should be called W.

For Stace each concept is a structure that consists in a system of relationships between an actual experience, on the one hand, and my earlier experiences, on the other. To one person, the concept *green,* for instance, can be the relationship that exists between an experience in the present of a green book and an earlier experience of something green, for instance, grass. One of the typical relationships is the similarity between both these experiences. <10>

(x) In the situation L at tl + 7 P utters S, which contains W, which is a name for the structural identity between PE3 and PE2.

I shall now introduce Alston's clarification of the nature of a referential theory. The result is as follows:

(xi)   The meaning of W consists in referring to identical structural properties for PE3 and PE2. <11>

(xii) Q has at (tl + 7)-n had PE, whose structural properties are identical with those of PE2

(xiii) Q understands W, which is uttered by P at tl + 71 if W refers to PE

The only thing required in order for Q to understand W, which is about an experience of P, is that Q's experiences should have the same structure as P's experiences. If Q has had an earlier experience, QE, of, for instance, green grass, then Q understands the expression "green", even if Q's experience would perhaps have been called "toothache" by P if P could have experienced what Q had experienced. There is thus a relationship based on similarity between an experience of an object and the concept *green* in both P's and Q's experiences. The structure of their experiences is the same, but the content in them may differ. Consequently, the content of the experience is irrelevant to the meaning of the concept. <12>

Henceforth I shall call this version of the referential theory Stace's "structural theory".

1. 1. 3. A Suggestion How to Apply the Referential Theory to Mystical Language Based on Stace's View in His Early Period

With the help of Alston's, Stace's and my own analytical apparatus, I shall present an implicative interpretation of Stace's earlier view of the meaning of mystical words/sentences.

(j) The mystic M has a mystical experience, ME1, at tl.

Unfortunately, Stace does not give any explicit definition of the concept of mystical experience during his earlier period. <13> I therefore take my own definition, presented in the Introduction, as the point of departure.

(jj) MEI is not introspectively distinguishable to M at ti.

MEI cannot be regarded introspectively, as the relationship between subject and object, which is assumed to function in the normal way in introspection, is suspended.

(jjj) ME1 is retrospectively indistinguishable to M at ti + 1

To be able to connect a mystical experience with a concept, an experience that can be distinguished in some way is required. If this cannot take place introspectively, it can do so retrospectively.

(jv) M has ME2 at tl + 2,
(v) ME2 is extrospectively distinguishable at t1 + 3
(vj) At tl + 4 M compares ME2 with the memory of MEI, ME 3
(vjj) At tl + 5 M discovers that ME2 and ME3 have the same structure.
(vjjj) On the basis of the comparison between ME2 and ME31 M draws the conclusion at tl + 6 that ME2 and ME3 should be called W.
(jx)   At tl + 7 in L M utters S, which contains W, which is a name for the structural identity between ME2 and ME3.

Meister Eckhart, the mystic, writes:

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. . . <14>

Every word in the sentences above would, according to Stace's theory, be a name of the structural identity between an earlier experience and that that is described in the present quotation. It is possible here, bearing in mind how Stace interpreted the expression "unity" in his later period, that "unity" here is a name for two mystical experiences whose structural properties are identical.

(x)   The meaning of W consists in referring to the identical structural properties of ME2 and ME3.

The meaning of the mystical word "unity", to link up with the example above, should thus consist in the word's reference to, for instance, the similarity between two or more mystical experiences.

In traditional empiricism, as that of Locke and Hume, for instance, and in logical empiricism, experience is always the same as sensory perception. Stace is against this conception. He is open to the possibility of there being other types of experience, for instance, mystical ones, which can be linked to linguistic expressions:

No doubt mystics do frequently give utterance to combinations of words which must be regarded, on any strict theory of meaning, as not possessing it. But it does not follow that the claim to mystical experience is as such meaningless. Such a view must depend, once more, upon the dogmatic denial that nonsensous experience is possible. But the mere fact that the content of that experience is alleged to be supersensous does not make it meaningless. <15>

(xj)   Q has, at (tl + 7)-n, had QE4 whose structural properties are identical with those of ME2.

(xjj) Q understands W, which is uttered by M at tl + 71 if W refers to QE4.

Applied to the example cited earlier, the word "unity" thus has a meaning for Q if Q, when Q reads W, connects W with the relationship between experience of unity in present time and past time.

Stace's argument has hitherto implied that mystical words/sentences refer to identical structural properties between QE4 and ME2. It seems, however, that Stace cannot be interpreted in that way, as he writes:

... the mystic finds difficulty in making himself intelligible to the masses of men. He can probably communicate his experience ... to the few who are like himself. The same might be said of the artist. < 16>

Here Stace denies that Q did not need to have had a mystical experience. But mystics often use words that are included in non-mystical language. That Q nevertheless is said not to understand, for instance, the word "unity" when it is used by a mystic means that Stace is either inconsistent or that he had made an exception for mystical experiences. Stace does not, however, mention anything about possible exceptions in his presentation.

1. 1. 4. Implications for the Problem of Identification

It is impossible to know what experience is connected with a concept as far as one person is concerned, because, according to Stace, the content of the experience is irrelevant to the meaning of the concept. The meaning of a concept does not consist in referring to content-related properties of experiences that are identical/similar to all people but consists in referring to identical structural properties of at least two experiences that have been compared by the sender/receiver. To identify a mystical experience is therefore not logically possible, and therefore not possible using a scientific method, even if the scientist should happen to be a mystic.

1.1.5. A Suggestion How to Apply the Referential Theory to Mystical Language Based on Stace's View in His Intermediate Period

(j)   M has ME at ti.
(jj)   ME is not introspectively distinguishable to M at ti

See comments under 1. 1. 3 , point (jj). Stace does not give any explicit definition of the concept of mystical experience during the intermediate period, as he thinks that the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable (see below).

(jjj) ME is extrospectively distinguishable to M at ti + 1
(jv) ME cannot be described.

According to Stace, mystics claim that the mystical experience is ineffable. Stace interprets the mystic's talk of ineffability in absolute terms and writes:

> The precise meaning of the statement that mystic experience is ineffable is that *it is absolutely incapable of being conceptualized.* In this meaning of the word, sense-experience is not ineffable at all. It can be quite easily conceptualized, and in consequence named. We have concepts of, and therefore names for, colour experiences, scents, sounds, material things. But mystic experience is claimed to be such that no concepts whatever can be formed of it, and therefore it cannot be expressed in words, either in regard to its content or its structure. <17> (The underlining is Stace's own.)

It is clear from the quotation that Stace has retained his structural theory. <18> It is true that in "Naturalism and Religion", he is uncertain what this theory means <19>, but he has not, either in that work or in any later one, attempted to refute it, nor has he explicitly adopted any other theory. Stace seems therefore to have made an exception for mystical experiences, which cannot, in contrast to other experiences, be conceptualized. Stace's interpretation of the concept of ineffability will be discussed in chapter 3.

(v)   M utters S. which contains W, in L at tl + 2

See 1.1.3 point (jx), for an example of a mystical utterance.

(vj)   W refers to ME in a symbolic way.

Stace writes:

> ... what the symbols refer to is the inner subjective experience of the mystic. <W>

But even if W has a referent, it has no meaning:

> The symbol does not mean, but evokes, the experience. For a meaning is, in strictness, a concept; whereas here there is no concept. <2l>

The reason why W has no meaning is, of course, that the experience is absolutely ineffable.

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The reason why W has no meaning is, of course, that the experience is absolutely ineffable.

In his typology of theories of meaning, Alston does not take up the possibility that a word could stand for anything in a symbolic sense. As far as I know, no one has attempted to put forward a referential theory in

this way. I believe, however, that it would not be logically incompatible with Alston's presentation of the referential theory, even if we have to stretch the concept of *reference* somewhat.

Both in his early and in his later period, Stace adheres to a referential theory. I have not discovered anything indicating that he was not one during the intermediate period as well. It is inconceivable that Stace would have accepted any of the other types of Alston's theories of meaning. <22>

(vjj) Q understands W, which is uttered by M in S in L, if Q intuitively realizes that W refers symbolically to Qme

> For they (the mystics) do not seek by their words to communicate their meaning to us, as when a man says "this is a house" or "that is a tree". They seek to evoke a meaning which is already in us. In this sense mystic or religious language is like poetry or music both of which call up what is within rather than describe what is without. <23>

Stace thinks that all what he calls "sensitive" people are mystics, even if most of them only have a very vague mystical experience. Most people can therefore understand mystical words and sentences, as these evoke something within them, however vague it may be. They understand intuitively what experience W is symbolically referring to. <24>

> And this experience, thus symbolized is actually present to the mind in the form of intuition, though not in the form of a conceptualizable representation. <25>

1.1.6. Implications for the Problem of Identification

Mystical words can neither stand for mystical experiences nor structural properties of mystical experiences as mystical words do not have any meaning. For a scientist, even if he is a mystic, it is impossible to identify a mystical experience as the mystical symbols are not translatable to a literally descriptive language. Even if the symbols were translatable, however, identification would be logically impossible, and therefore also impossible using scientific methods, because of the structural theory, something we were made aware of in the previous section. True, all "sensitive" people can recognize the mystical experience intuitively by means of the mystical symbols. But this recognition cannot be translated into a scientific language.

1.1.7. A Suggestion How to Apply the Referential Theory to Mystical Language Based on Stace's View in His Later Period

In the later period Stace explains the relationship between mystical experience, on the one hand, and the mystic's interpretation on the other. I shall call this theory Stace's "cognition theory" and I shall describe it briefly here as I shall refer to it later. Stace's theory of cognition is an application of his earlier views on the relationship between experience and language. <26>

(j) M has MEI at t1
(jj) MEI is an uninterpreted experience.

This is included in Stace's cognition theory. <27>

(jjj) MEI is introspectively distinguishable to M at t1

In the introduction to the problem of the possible common core of mystical experience, Stace discusses the possibility of introspection. He concludes:

At any rate, we do in some way know introspectively what is going on in our minds, and there is certainly much that we cannot know except by introspection. <28>

Stace has not made any attempt to except mystical experiences from the possibility of introspection. Stace claims, however, that the suspension of the relationship between subject and object is a characteristic feature of what he calls an "introvertive" mystical experience:

It should follow that just as there are in it no distinctions between one object and another there can likewise be no distinction between subject and object. <N>

It is a puzzle to me how it can be possible to introspect an experience that is characterized by the fact that the distinction between subject and object is suspended.

(jv)   M connects MEI with W, which is a name for ME, at t1 + 1

Stace's referential theory is, as we see, not of the classic type. Even *mystical* experiences can be connected with linguistic expressions. The thesis (jv) is included in Stace's cognition theory. Interpretation of a mystical experience can take place at two different levels, the first of which Stace names "low-level interpretation", the other "high-level interpretation". From now I shall call these types of interpretation "classification interpretation" and "doctrinal interpretation". In the former the mystic makes use of what Stace calls "classificatory concepts", such as *undifferentiated, distinctionless, unity,* etc, while the latter includes concepts that go beyond a description of the experience. Examples of the latter are expressions such as "God", "Brahman". <30> In the utterance of Eckhart cited above, Stace interprets the mystical words "unity" and "forms are no more" as expressions of a classification interpretation, while the mystical word "Godhead" belongs to the doctrinal interpretation. <3l>

   The difference between the uninterpreted experience and classification interpretation is, according to Stace, logical but not psychological. Even the distinction between both interpretation levels is logical, but can also often be psychological. After the experience is over, the mystic interprets it as a meeting with, for instance, God. <32> Stace has not stated what the words that express doctrinal interpretation refer to, that is, words that do not describe the properties of the mystical experience.

   That is as far as the discussion on Stace's cognition theory goes. <33>

(v) M has ME2 at t, + 2
 (vj) ME2 is introspectively distinguishable at tl + 2
 (vjj) M remembers MEI at tl + 3

   The mystical experience is now over.

(vjjj) At tl + 4 M compares ME2 with the memory of ME, ME3.
(jx)   M discovers at tl + 5 that ME3 and ME2 are similar to each other.
(x)   At tl + 6 M concludes that it is correct to designate ME2 W.
 (xj)   At tl + 7 in L M utters S, which contains W, which is a name for ME3 and ME2
(xjj) The meaning of W consists in referring to ME3 and/or ME2.

Stace claims that mystical language adequately describes mystical experience. He writes, for example, about mystical paradoxes:

The paradox which he has uttered has correctly described his experience. The language is only paradoxical because the experience is paradoxical. Thus the language correctly mirrors the experience. <34>

Stace has admitted that he has changed his position with regard to the reference of mystical words, as compared with his conception of this during the intermediate period. <35>

(xjjj) Q understands W, which is uttered by M in S in L at t1 that W refers to ME3 and/or ME2.

1. 1. 8. Implications for the Problem of Identification

In contrast to those from his earlier and intermediate period, if we accept Stace's theory of meaning from his later period, then it is logically possible, and also possible to use a scientific method, to identify the properties of a mystical experience with regard to the meaning of mystical words/sentences. There are examples of mystical words that stand for properties of the mystical experience and not, as previously, for the structural identity between experiences or for something in the mystical experience that could not be conceptualized.

The structural theory is not mentioned in Stace's later period, and it is easy to understand why. If Stace had accepted the structural theory, he could not have claimed that identification was possible. However, even though Stace does not mention the structural theory or discuss it, all the signs indicate that he is still a referential theorist. This should be obvious from the above.

1. 1. 9. Criticism of the Referential Theory

Several common objections are:

(a) We cannot find a reference for all words and sentences. What do words such as "if", "are", "and", "or" refer to is a question Alston puts. These words appear to have meaning but lack reference. Referential theorists have defended their point of view by, among other things, claiming that syncategorematic terms such as "and", "if" etc., do not have reference because they do not have any meaning if they are not connected with other words in a sentence. Alston believes however that if we say that "if" has the same meaning as "provided that", then we have said something about the meaning of these words, irrespective of the context. <36> To say that the word "and" represents the conjunctive function and "or" the disjunctive does not help according to Alston. What is a conjunctive function? The only thing we can say is that it is what we claim applies between the fact that it is raining and the fact that the sun is shining in the sentence "It's raining and the sun is shining". We do not know what a conjunctive function is if we do not take into account how we use the word "and", that is to say, we have not found an independent referent for the word "and". <37>

The same arguments, that certain words or phrases have meaning but lack reference, can be put forward about modal auxiliary verbs such as "could", "should", and about words such as "society", "neurosis", "language", "all", "no", "with", "often" etc. <38> The same goes for sentences that state something that has not yet occurred. Gilbert Ryle gives the example "the third man to stand on the top of Mt Everest", which in 1957, when Ryle wrote the article from which the example comes, did not refer to any specific person. <39> Other examples are sentences that deny something, <40> or words/ sentences that refer to something that does not exist, for instance. "ghosts", "unicorns" or "the first man to stand on the top of Mr Everest" after Hillary's death. <4l>

(b) The referential theory, according to Alston, is only applicable to words that are used in a proposition. Language has, however, other functions as well, such as expressing feelings or asking questions. Words such as "oh", "hurray", express feelings, but do not refer to feelings. These words have meaning, nevertheless. Otherwise they would not be used. Alston therefore claims that meaning consists in referring to something cannot apply generally. <42>

(c) To understand W's meaning by realizing what W refers to presupposes that you already know W's meaning. This is the problem of so-called ostensive definitions, which aim, to put it briefly, at the following. When P points to an object, for example, a horse, and utters the word "horse", Q cannot know that the expression "horse" stands exclusively for the concept of *horse* and not, for instance, the concept of

four-footed animal. For Q to realize that the expression in question stands for the concept of horse, Q must already know the meaning of the expression. <43>

(d) The referential theory presumes the existence of a private language, but it is impossible to construct a language of this kind. This is, above all, a criticism levelled by the later Wittgenstein. As I shall deal with this question in the following section, I shall not comment on it further here.

(e) I have examined the cognition theories of Stace and others in detail in an earlier study, with reference to their application to mystical experiences <44>, so that 1 shall content myself here with providing a short summary of the criticism of what I have called Stace's "reductionist" theory of cognition. A more detailed examination would take us too far from the main problem.

Criticism of Stace's cognition theory has focussed on two areas: first, criticism of the logical possibility of uninterpreted experiences, second, criticism of the possibility of distinguishing between classification and doctrinal interpretation. As my problem concerns the question of identification, I shall limit myself to summing up the criticism concerning the second area.

The criticism then is based on the fact that it is very difficult to distinguish between classification and doctrinal interpretation because

I. Mankind's psychological constitution is such that experiences are affected by the conceptions that the person in question has. We do not experience reality by photographically reproducing objects and situations. An element of interpretation is an integral part of the experience. We experience things and persons through a filter that is determined by the conceptions we have, the concepts that language supplies, the goals we have set up, etc. The mystic, by reading religious and, especially, mystical writings, participation in rites, prayers, etc., has built up a framework that affects the mystical experiences. In other words, the mystic does not, as Stace claims, experience undifferentiated unity that are later interpreted in a doctrinal fashion as "God", for example. The Christian mystic experiences God, the Hindu experiences Brahman, etc. It is therefore difficult to maintain any differentiation between classification and doctrinal interpretation. <45>

II. A study of how the mystic uses the concepts that are found in descriptions of mystical experiences shows that the concepts vary so much in different traditions that the mystical experiences cannot possibly be identical. In chapter 4 we shall see examples of this. The Jewish mystic's experience of Jahve is not the same an experience of undifferentiated unity, as Stace claims. It is therefore difficult to defend a distinction between classification and doctrinal interpretation. <46>

III. In certain cases, descriptions of mystical experiences cannot be made intelligible if we do not suppose that the concepts that, according to Stace, belong to doctrinal interpretation really belong to classification interpretation, that is, are a description of an experience. When Ruysbroeck, the Dutch mystic, writes that he experience a difference between himself and God in the mystical experience (see chapter 4), it is difficult to claim that Ruysbroeck did not experience God. Consequently, the mystical expression "God" should not be part of a doctrinal interpretation but a part of a classification one. <47>

As the main problem concerns the possibility of identifying a mystical experience by a scientific method, I have limited criticism of the referential theory only to that version of the theory that belongs to Stace's later period. As we have seen, a referential theory is beset with many problems. Stace has neither explicitly applied the theory to mystical language nor put forward any argument in support of it. In addition, as already mentioned, there is an alternative theory that has been applied to mystical language. This is the theory of use, which 1 shall deal with next.

1.2. The Theory of Use and Its Application to Mystical Language

This theory of meaning is primarily based on the later ideas of Ludwig Wittgenstein as exemplified in 'Blue Book" (1933-1934), "Brown Book" (1934-1935) and in "Philosophische Untersuchungen" (1953). The last

work was published posthumously. Blue Book and Brown Book consist of notes for lectures dictated to the students at Cambridge. He did not formulate his view of language systematically in his later period. Many different interpretations of Wittgenstein's theory have therefore been suggested. That of William P Alston is one.

As previously mentioned, Alston has not discussed Wittgenstein's criticism of the idea of a private language. I shall therefore also make use of Norman Malcolm's interpretation of Wittgenstein's ideas in this respect. <48>

1. 2. 1. Characteristic Properties of a Theory of Use

(1) P performs a locutionary act, LA, in that P utters S1. <49>

Uttering a sentence is called by Alston performing a '1ocutionary act".

(ii) P can perform a perlocutionary act, PA, by performing LA. <50>

An utterance of S1 that brings about a specific result is a perlocutionary act. Some examples of result can be that P irritates Q, encourages Q, frightens Q. Examples of verbs that, according to Alston, express perlocutionary acts are "persuade", "encourage", "make X do", "amuse". "inspire". A perlocutionary act can be performed without being preceded by a locutionary act. P, for example, by looking round the table can get Q to pass him the salt. <5l>

(iii) P can perform an illocutionary act, 1A, by performing LA. <52>

Alston believes that, for example, the following verbs or verbal phrases express illocutionary acts: "ask", "report", "predict". <53> Some examples of illocutionary acts are to ask somebody about something, *report* something to somebody, *predict* something.

In contrast to a perlocutionary act, an illocutionary act must be preceded by a locutionary act, that is, P must utter S1 to be able to report, promise, etc. or, alternatively, use a sentence substitute, for instance, wave with flags in accordance with definite rules.

An illocutionary act can cause a perlocutionary one to be performed, but not vice-versa. P cannot get Q to understand that the battery is dead to be able to report that the battery is dead. If P gets Q to understand that the battery is dead, this may be the result if P, for example, having *reported* this to Q. <54>

(iv) P performs 1A if and only if P realizes that S, is used according to certain rules, R, that require the conditions Cl ... C,, to be fulfilled.<55>

Alston exemplifies as follows:

In order that S can be said to have asked H to open a door, S must utter an appropriate sentence, s, and recognize that the following rules govern his utterance:

s is not to be uttered in that sort of context unless the following conditions hold:
1. There is a particular door that is singled out by something in the context.
2. That door is not already open.
3. It is possible for H to open that door.
4. S has some interest in getting H to open that door. <56>

The conditions do not necessarily have to be actually fulfilled. P need not even believe that they are fulfilled, only P realizes that the utterance of S1 is governed by rules that demand that certain conditions are upheld. <57> As should be clear from the above, the rules here are not grammatical, moral rules, etc., but semantic rules, that is, rules that control the use of words. <58>

(v) The meaning of S1 consists in P realizing what potential 1A P can perform or not perform by uttering S1.

Alston means that it is not necessary to be able to determine what this potential is theoretically. To know what is meant by S1 is in practice to know how to use S1 correctly, that is according to R. <59>

(vi) The person Q understands S, when Q realizes what 1A P is performing through S1.

Thesis (vi) is not mentioned explicitly by Alston, but is an implicative interpretation. The thesis has been included here because of its relevance to the discussion of the possibility of identifying a mystical experience by a scientific method.

1.2.2. Wittgenstein's Criticism of Private Language

(i) P knows that P uses W/S correctly only if there are rules that can help P to decide. <60>

(ii) P has no R for the correct use of W/S if W stands for a name of a property of the experiences PE1 and PE2. <6l>

P believes perhaps that W stands for a property of PE1 and PE2 as P at t1 remembers PE1 which P thinks is similar to PE2. But W is used quite arbitrarily. P cannot know whether he remembers incorrectly or not as he cannot test his memory of PE1 against any other memory. P would then end up in a circle, of course. There is no independent authority with whose help P can decide whether the memory should be called "correct" or not. P cannot know of he is following R or if he only believes that he is doing so. <62> Wittgenstein's conclusion is that we cannot make use of the concept of correct memory in a private language, as this concept is unintelligible. We need external criteria to be able to decide whether or not W is used correctly by P. Semantic rules presuppose something that is universally available. <63>

(iii) P learns the meaning of W/S by connecting W/S with special situations.

To know how the meaning of W/S is generated, we must, according to Wittgenstein, analyse how a person learns his language. A child learns the word "pain" when an adult utters sentences containing the word "pain" when the child has a pain. Learning thus takes place in specific situations and the word "pain" becomes linked to these types of situation. The meaning of the word "pain" is thus logically dependent on the natural expressions that exist in behaviour when pain is experienced. In this way, a child learns a new type of behaviour in relation to pain. Instead of crying, it expresses pain by means of the word "pain", which is an expression of pain, not a description of it. All words for experiences are used in the same way. Consequently, the words do not in themselves refer to the experiences. <64>

So far I have only discussed Wittgenstein's view of the relationship between the user's experience and the words in his language. For my main problem, however, it is just as important to clarify how the theory of use regards the relationship between the user's words/sentences and the receiver's interpretation of these words/sentences, in respect of the possibility of obtaining knowledge of the sender's experiences. Wittgenstein's view of this question, is, according to Malcolm's interpretation, as follows:

(iv) The criteria for Q to be able to understand that P has PE1 is that P behaves in a specific way and/or utters S, which is an expression for PE1

The propositions that describe the criteria for P experiencing pain do not logically imply the proposition "P has a pain". The criteria apply only in specific situations. These do not apply, for instance, if P is rehearsing a play in which he has to pretend that he has a pain, or if P has been hypnotized so as to make him behave as if he has a pain without actually having one, etc. The expression for pain is thus only one criterion of pain in specific situations. <65>

Malcolm admits that it is difficult to accept that it does not logically follow from the proposition about P's behaviour that P has a pain. To form a conjunction consisting in, first, the proposition about P's behaviour, second, a negation of all propositions that describe situations other than the one in question would not help, in other words. This is not because the number of situations would be innumerable, but indefinite. Our semantic rules then are very vague. We can always find other circumstances that could alter the meaning of the sentences. <66> Malcolm thinks that this is perhaps the kind of reasoning that lies behind Wittgenstein's views on pain behaviour.

The problem is now the following. If the proposition about P's behaviour and a description of the circumstances do not logically imply that P has a pain, how can we then know that P has a pain? Wittgenstein answers that we can be just as certain that a person has a specific experience as we are of facts. Malcolm thinks that Wittgenstein is vague on this point, but he believes that Wittgenstein means the following: In real life, in contrast to in theory, there are situations when we are certain that someone has, for instance, a pain. We simply do not doubt it. Naturally, one can, theoretically, find other circumstances that would alter the interpretation of P's behaviour. But in real life we do not continue to ponder over P's behaviour when we are certain but try to assist the person in question. If anyone were to doubt all the time that an expression of pain was genuine, it means that he has not used any criterion for pain. <67>

The criterion of whether P has, for instance, a pain or not is first and foremost P's behaviour and the circumstances in which P expresses pain and then P's words, whether they agree with the behaviour and the circumstances. When we use the sentence "P has a pain", this does not mean that we imagine that P's pain lies behind P's pain behaviour. Wittgenstein makes use of ideas that remind us of Alston's concept of perlocutionary act. The one who sees P's behaviour, who sees under what circumstances P is behaving as he does, who hears P's words, reacts by trying to help P, or at least by sympathizing with P. <68>

Finally, a few words about Wittgenstein's concept of *language game,* which I take up here because of its relevance to the discussion of the main problem. Unfortunately, Malcolm has not explained what Wittgenstein means by this concept. According to Vincent Brümmer, a language game is the social activity that a group of people participates in when using language as a means of communication and which determines the actual illocutionary acts. <69> The expression "queen" is used, for example, quite differently in the language games of chess, bridge and in politics.

(v) P cannot-have a private language.

1.2.3. A Suggestion for Applying the Theory of Use to Mystical Language

When applying the theory of use, I shall employ the analytical apparatus of Alston, Malcolm, Burr and Hoffman, as well as my own. Even if Hoffman's takes the ontological object that mystics claim to acquire knowledge of as his point of departure, while Burr discusses the mystical experience without distinguishing between experience and ontological object, it is my opinion that in principle they put forward the same arguments. As my aim is not to give a complete account of the theories of Burr and Hoffmann, but to discuss the possibility of identifying a mystical experience, I shall only refer to the aspects of their theories that are relevant to my problem.

(vjjj) The criteria for Q to understand that S expresses that M has had MEI is that M has a specific type of behaviour and/or utters S, which is an expression for MEI,

Robert Burr admits that when we attempt to find criteria for M having had ME1 by investigating the behaviour of the mystic, it is not so easy as when we talk of, for example, pain behaviour. If a person has mystical experiences, this seldom takes place during the period when he is learning to speak. As an adult he already commands words for inner experiences. Perhaps we can find indications of his having had a mystical experience, for instance, a great feeling of relief or peace. In Burr's view, ethical consequences are another area in which criteria may perhaps be found. <72>

(jx) M cannot have a private language.

(x) The meaning of S1 consists in M realizing what potential 1A M can perform or not perform by uttering S1.

(xj) Q understands S1 when Q realizes what 1A M is performing through SP

1.2.4. Implications for the Problem of Identification

A mystic is unable to describe properties of a mystical experience as there are no rules for the correct use of the words when this applies to the description of private experiences. Even if every person that belongs to the same language game as the mystic can know what a mystical experience is, this knowledge cannot be described, even within that language game. It does not help, therefore, that the researcher is a mystic. If we accept the theory of use, it is not logically possible, and therefore not possible using a scientific method, to identify a mystical experience.

1.2.5. Criticism of the Theory of Use

Here are some of the usual objections:

(a) To connect a word with an experience of something of a private nature is no different from connecting a word with an experience of an object that is available to all. A.J. Ayer, who presented this criticism, takes as his point of departure Wittgenstein's example of a train timetable. P can find out if the memory of an earlier perception of a special part of a train timetable is correct by testing his memory against the train timetable, which then functions as an independent authority that is available to all. But, Ayer claims, when P tests his memory of the perception, it is tested against yet another perception. P has to trust that he has, for instance, reasonably good eyesight and that he can read the figures correctly. Every rule according to which P is to decide whether P is using W/S correctly must, in other words, be tested against some form of sensory experience. It is also on the basis of P's sensory perception that P can decide whether Q is using W/S in the same way as P does. If P, concludes Ayer, connects an experience of an object that is available to all with a linguistic expression, there is no reason to believe that P would not be able to connect an experience of something of a private nature with a linguistic expression. <U>

(b) It is not impossible for Q to understand W/S even if Q cannot perceive what W/S is referring to. We seem to be capable of determining properties of experiences that we ourselves have never had, Ayer claims. A mother can draw the conclusion that her child has a pain by the fact, for example, that the baby is crying and/or by discovering what she assumes to be the cause of the pain. The mother can therefore teach the child how to name experiences of pain. In the same way, that is through the actions people exhibit, we also decide that these people have certain types of experiences of objects that are available to all. There is no essential difference between decisions concerning private and public experiences. It is true that the conclusion from

behaviour to experience is not logical, but even here there is, in principle, no difference between experiences of a private nature and those of objects available to all. <74>

(c) It is not logically necessary that anyone other than P should understand W/S that are used by P to describe experiences for W/S to have a meaning. If Robinson Crusoe, to use Ayer's classic example, was left alone on his island without having learnt any language, he would perhaps have discovered a language with which to describe experiences of a private nature. Ayer repudiates the idea that language can only be developed in connection with society. The reason is that someone at some point in time must have started using linguistic expressions. Even if this took place in a social situation, it is nevertheless logically possible that, at the beginning, words could have been uttered by a single person who had developed signs for his private experiences. It is difficult to claim, says Ayer, that a language could only have been developed by Friday arriving on the island. Even if Crusoe could not teach Friday the signs for his private experiences, it does not follow that Crusoe could not use words for his own purposes, that is, the words have had meaning all the same. <75> The fact that Crusoe did not have any other way of determining his experiences than by means of his memory does not imply that he could not determine his experiences or that it would be meaningless to say that he could not decide whether his memory was correct or not. <76>

(d) The theory has not accounted for the meaning of words. Alston himself has admitted this. <77>

1.3. Short Summary and Concluding Remarks

One of the problems that Stace has to solve in order to enable the identification of mystical experiences by a scientific method is to put forward and supply arguments in favour of a theory of meaning that considers the relationship between, on the one hand, mystical words/sentences and, on the other, mystical experiences, in such a way that we are able to determine properties of the mystical experiences from mystical words/sentences. In addition, such a theory has to be shown to be the one we should prefer among a series of rival theories.

An explicitly formulated theory of this sort does not exist today. But it is my opinion that Stace in his later period has such a theory of meaning as his point of departure. As my investigation is based on the only theory today that is positive to the possibility of identifying a mystical experience, the theory of Walter T. Stace, I have chosen to reconstruct that type of theory of meaning that Stace implicitly accepted. Stace's referential theory from his later period, applied to mystical language, means that the mystic regards the mystical experience introspectively and connects it with words that are names for properties of the experience in question. After the experience is over the mystic can make intellectual additions, for instance, by saying that he experienced unity with God. Thus the word "God" does not refer to the mystical experience, but, as mystical words can stand for properties of the mystical experience, it is logically possible, and even possible with a scientific method, to identify properties of mystical experiences with regard to the meaning of mystical words/sentences.

The referential theory is, however, beset with great difficulties. We cannot find a referent for all the available words/sentences in the language. The theory applies only to propositions. There are many other ways, however, of using language than uttering propositions. To understand the meaning of a word by realizing what the word refers to presupposes that you already know the meaning of the word. In addition, the theory presumes the existence of a private language, which is impossible to construct according to the later Wittgenstein. Stace's cognition theory, which is a part of his referential theory, also presents great difficulties. Psychological observations and studies of mystical texts have shown that it is very difficult to distinguish between classification and doctrinal interpretation.

An alternative theory for explaining the meaning of mystical sentences is the theory of use. This means, briefly, that mystical sentences may be used in a number of different ways, for instance, by promising or claiming that the way of the mystic leads to God. The intention when uttering a mystical sentence is to bring

about a certain effect in the receiver, for example, to inspire or guide a novice on the mystical way. The mystic utters a mystical sentence in accordance with semantic rules requiring the fulfilment of certain conditions. The meaning of a mystical sentence consists in the mystic realizing what he can achieve by uttering the sentence under the specific conditions, that is, when he knows how he can use the sentence in question.

According to the theory of use, the mystic cannot use the language for describing a mystical experience. The reason is that inner "private" experiences cannot represent the ultimate authority that is required to be able to decide whether the word/sentence is used correctly. To be able to check that a sentence is used correctly, authorities available to all are required, for example, the behaviour of the sender and the circumstances under which the sentence is uttered. Words can not describe properties of mystical experiences. Adoption of the theory of use therefore logically excludes the possibility of identifying a mystical experience, and therefore also of identifying it using a scientific method. However, the theory of use is not free from objections. Aver thinks that there is no difference between connecting a word with an experience of something "private" and connecting a word with an experience of an object available to the public. Neither is it impossible for the receiver to understand a word/sentence even if he cannot perceive what the word/sentence is referring to. In addition, it is not logically necessary that anyone other than the sender should understand a sentence that is used to describe a "private" experience for a sentence to have meaning. Alston also admits that the theory cannot explain the meaning of words.

The theory of use does not allow that it is logically possible to identify a mystical experience. As this theory is the only one so far that has been explicitly applied to mystical language, I am forced to conclude that there is no theory in existence today that explains the meaning of mystical words/sentences in such a way that mystical experiences can be identified by a scientific method.

Another problem that Stace has to solve before a mystical experience can be identified scientifically is that of function. Stace has to show that mystical sentences function descriptively, that is, are used to describe properties of mystical experiences, something that Stace's version of the referential theory takes for granted. Stace has tried to show this. An investigation of the possible descriptive function of mystical sentences is the theme of the next chapter.

Notes

1. Alston's typology of theories of meaning also includes what he calls the "behavioural" and "ideational" theories. The reason for not discussing these theories is that so far no-one has applied them to mystical language. But it is easy to see that neither of them makes it possible to identify a mystical experience. The behavioural theory analyses the meaning of a sentence in terms of a specific response to or disposition to specific behaviour on the part of the receiver, brought about by the sentence under specific conditions (see Alston 1964, pp 28-31 and Alston 1972, pp 235-237) Therefore, this theory does not state any relationship between words and the private experiences of the sender. The ideational theory of meaning states that a meaning of a sentence consists in realizing what ideas the sender has in mind when uttering the sentence. Every word stands for a specific idea and ideas are derived from sense perception (see Alston 1964, pp 22-25 and Alston 1972, pp 235,237). As the mystical experience does not include sense perception, the ideational theory of meaning would not be applicable to mystical language. But even if some mystical experience included sense perception, as Stace asserts, the theory would not permit the identification of a mystical experience. The reason is that scientists who study mystical experiences or results of research on mystical experiences must themselves be mystics in order to understand mystical texts/scientific reports. This requirement is difficult to defend.
2. Alston 1964, pp 12-13 and Alston 1972, p 234.
3. Alston 1964, pp 12-13.
4. Alston 1964, p 14. I suppose Alston is referring to Russell's theory of meaning here. Se Russell 1921, p 191.

5. Alston 1964, pp 15-16.
6. Alston 1964, p 16.
7. Alston 1964, p 65.
8. Stace 1935, p 427.
9. Stace 1958, p 468. See also p 472, Stace 1935, p 426 and Stace 1940, p 10, 22
10. Stace 1935, pp 433-434.
11. I have not given an account of Stace's views on the meaning of sentences, because Stace argue that the meaning of sentences is determined by the meaning of the separate words and therefore subordinate to the latter. See Stace 1944, p 234.
12. Stace 1935, p 434.
13. Stace only argues that in the mystical experience the mystic directly cognizes (parts of) God's consciousness (Stace 1940, p 249, 252). Consequently, Stace does not use his theory of cognition in the same way in the earlier and later period. In his later period Stace does not state that the mystic experiences God. When the mystic uses terms for God, these do not refer to mystical experience but should be regarded as intellectual comments.
14. Blakney 1941, pp 200-201. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 98.
15. Stace 1935, pp 430-431. See Also Stace 1940, p 19.
16. Stace 1935, p 431.
17. Stace 1949-1950, p 25.
18. See also Stace 1952c, p 27.
19. Stace 1949-1950, p 25.
20. Stace 1949-1950, p 36.
21. Stace 1952a, p 91.
22. See 1. 2. 1. and note 1.
23. Stace 1952a, p 86.
24. Stace 1952b. p 245.
25. Stace 1952a, pp 65-66.
26. Stace argues that what he calls the "introvertive" mystical experience has the following characteristic properties: 1. The Unitary Consciousness, The One, The Void, pure conscious ness, 2. Nonspatial, nontemporal, 3. Sense of objectivity or reality, 4. Blessedness, peace etc., 5. Feeling of the holy, sacred, or divine, 6. Paradoxicality, 7. Alleged by the mystics to be ineffable, (Stace 1960a, pp 131-132). Stace's definition of "extrovertive" mystical experience is identical to the above except for 1-2. The first quality is also unity, but is experienced by means of sense perception. Point 2 consists in the mystic experiencing the unity as something alive in every object (Stace 1960a, p 131. See also Stace 1960b, pp 12-23 and Stace 1967b, p 21, 25-26)
27. Stace 1960a. p 31. Stace's theory of cognition applied to sense perception is already to b found in his earlier period. See Stace 1940, p 159.
28. Stace 1960a, p 60.
29. Stace 1960a, p 111.
30. Stace 1960a, p 37.
31. Ibid.
32. Stace 1960a, p 31, 37.
33. Christine Overall has shown how the concept of "the given", which Stace makes use of in his earlier period, is used when he develops his theory of cognition in his later period. See Overall 1980, p 47-55.
34. Stace 1960a, p 305. Mystical paradoxes will be discussed in Chapter 3.
35. Stace 1960a, p 293.
36. Alston 1964, p 14.
37. Alston 1964, p 18. See also Hospers 1978, p 20 and Ryle 1957, p 245.
38. Alston 1964, p 17, 67. See also Brümmer 1982, p 44, Ryle 1957, p 245, Black 1968, p 152 and Brody 1973, p 12.
39. Ryle 1957, pp 244-245.
40. Brody 1973, pp 12-13.
41. Black 1968, p 152, Brody 1973, p 12, Hospers 1978, pp 20-21 and Ryle 1957, p 245.

42. Alston 1964, p 16. See also Brümmer 1982, pp 45-46 and Hospers 1978, p 20.
43. Hospers 1978, p 21.
44. Norrman 1982.   -
45. See Katz 1978 and Garside 1972.
46. See Katz 1978 and Fakhry 1971.
47. See Pike 1965 and Owen 1971, who both, it is true, attack Smart's theory. But the logical structure of Stace's theory is the same as Smart's. See Norrman 1982, pp 16-19 and Corbenic 1978, p 117.
48. The reason why Alston has not dealt with Wittgenstein's criticism of the private language could be that he has not found Wittgenstein's arguments convincing. See Alston 1980, p 140.
49. Alston 1964, pp 34-35. The terms "locutionary", "perlocutionary" and "illocutionary" are not Wittgenstein's.
50. Ibid.
51. Alston 1964, pp 35-36.
52. Alston 1964, p 35.
53. Ibid.
54. Alston 1964, p 36.
55. Alston 1964, pp 42-43.
56. Alston 1964, p 42.
57. Alston 1964, pp 42-43.
58. Alston 1964, p 44
59. Alston 1964, p 39.
60. Malcolm 1963, pp 98-99.
61. Malcolm 1963, pp 99-101, 104.
62. Malcolm 1963, pp 99-101.
63. Malcolm 1963, pp 103-104.
64. Malcolm 1963, p 107.
65. Malcolm 1963, pp 113-114.
66. Malcolm 1963, pp 114-115.
67. Malcolm 1963, pp 116-117.
68. Malcolm 1963, pp 117-119.
69. Brümmer 1982, p 13.
70. Neither Burr nor Hoffmann has explicitly tried to define the concept of mystical experience.
71. Hoffman 1960, pp 68-69.
72. Burr 1976, pp 284-286.
73. Ayer & Rhees 1954, pp 68.
74. Ayer & Rhees 1954, pp 72-74.
75. Ayer & Rhees 1954, pp 70-72.
76. Ayer 6 Rhees 1954, pp 71-72. See also Tanburn 1963, pp 89-90.
77. Alston 1964, pp 38-39.

2. The Semantic Functions of Mystical Sentences

The Problem

Acceptance of Stace's version of the referential theory presupposes that mystical language functions descriptively, that is, is used to describe properties of mystical experiences. To enable the identification of a mystical experience by a scientific method Stace has to show that mystical sentences actually function descriptively. Stace has attempted to show this, but not without being criticized. There are some who argue that mystical sentences do not function descriptively but, for instance, evocatively or expressively. If the mystical sentences do not function descriptively, it is then logically impossible to identify a mystical experience and, consequently, to identify it using a scientific method.

Analytical Apparatus

Besides the concepts that were elucidated in the introduction, I shall distinguish between six functions of mystical sentences:

I.   If mystical sentences have a *descriptive* function, the mystic describes properties, positive or negative, of the mystical experience. When the mystic uses a separate word to denote a property of a mystical experience, I say that the words is used literally.
II. When the mystic uses language *instructively,* the mystic is telling the novice what he should do to obtain mystical experiences.
III. Symbolic function. Mystical sentences function symbolically if mystical words point out something, for example, a property of a mystical experience, in an indirect, not a literal, way. A sentence with a symbolic function may be translated into a sentence with a descriptive function.
IV. Evocative function refers to the use of mystical sentences to evoke mystical experiences in the receiver.
V.   Expressive function. When the mystic uses the sentence expressively, he uses the words to express his feelings but not to describe them.
VI. Inspirational function. Many gurus and Zen teachers often use language to encourage the novice along the mystical way. The mystic then uses language inspirationally.

The six functions described above are an attempt to classify the theories that I have found in the material, irrespective of whether the theories follow normal lines within analytical philosophy or not. It is not common within analytical philosophy, for instance, to say that sentences function informatively with regard to *experiences.* Instead, one talks of information being transferred with reference to states of affairs etc.

Material

(a)   Stace in his later period put forward the theory that mystical sentences actually function descriptively or symbolically. The theory has been criticized by Troy Organ and Quinten Lance Corbenic.

(b)   Another theory asserts that mystical sentences only function evocatively. This is represented by Stace in his intermediate period. Criticism of this theory comes from Stace himself in his later period and from Corbenic.

(c)   Troy Organ claims that mystical sentences only function inspirationally, evocatively or expressively. The theory has been criticized by Peter Moore.

As an orthodox later Wittgensteinian, as we saw in Chapter 1, cannot accept that mystical language functions descriptively/symbolically, I have refrained here from giving an account of these theories. <l> All the theories in this chapter thus have accepted the referential theory.

My immediate task is to present the later theory of Stace, to criticize it and to give an account of alternative solutions in order to ascertain whether mystical sentences function in such a way that it is possible to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method, that is, if mystical sentences at least function descriptively/symbolically.

I have chosen to deal only with those theories that contain explicit arguments. <2> None of the theories that I investigate takes up the question of identification. One of my tasks is therefore to determine the implications for the main problem of accepting each theory. Finally, I should like to point out that in my criticism of each theory I have limited myself to the objections that are relevant to the main problem. I have not, for instance, criticized the theory for lack of completeness, which is a fault common to all, as this is not relevant to my problem. My problem only concerns the fact whether mystical sentences can be shown to function descriptively/symbolically. The question of the number of other functions is not relevant to the main problem. The same applies to discussion of arguments for and against whether mystical sentences function evocatively, expressively, etc. In the majority of cases, such a discussion does not concern the question whether mystical sentences also function descriptively/symbolically.

2. 1. 1. Descriptive or Symbolic Function: Stace's Later Theory

(i) An investigation of how mystics actually use mystical language shows that there are mystical sentences that function descriptively.

In the Mandukya upanishad we are informed of a fourth, mystical condition in consciousness, besides sleep, dream sleep and wakefulness. Stace quotes:

> The Fourth, say the wise... is not the knowledge of the senses, nor is it relative knowledge, nor yet inferential knowledge. Beyond the senses, beyond the understanding, beyond all expression, is the Fourth. It is pure unitary consciousness, wherein awareness of the world and of multiplicity is completely obliterated. <3>

Stace claims that the expressions "unitary consciousness", "beyond the senses" and "in which all multiplicity is obliterated" are not symbolic. Stace thinks that symbols are often sensory images. But mystical concepts are abstract. The mystical concept of unity, for example, is an abstract concept and not a sensory image. Stace cannot understand what the expression "unity" would stand for if it were a symbol. The same argument can, according to Stace, be put forward with regard to the mystical expressions "all multiplicity is obliterated" and undifferentiated unity". They cannot symbolize anything but have the "marks" <4> that descriptive expressions have. <5> Stace asserts that the descriptive function of mystical sentences applies to many of the utterances that mystics use when talking of their experiences. It even applies to sentences expressing paradoxes. Eckhart writes:

> All that man has here externally in multiplicity is intrinsically One. Here all blades of grass, wood, and stone, all things are One. This is the deepest depth... <6>

When Eckhart writes that grass, wood and stone are not separate from one another but are One, this is, according to Stace, an illustration of the fundamental property of the mystical experience, namely unity. "All is One". The fact that the proposition is paradoxical, that multiplicity is multiplicity and One simultaneously, provides no grounds for suspecting that the sentence functions symbolically, Stace continues. If someone claims that a square is round, we do not suspect that the person in question is speaking in symbolic terms. Of course, we do not believe him. We consider that he is contradicting himself, but that is another thing. <7> In

short, Stace has not found in his investigations of how mystics use language any evidence that mystical sentences do not contain descriptions of properties of mystical experiences. <8>

(ii)   The way in which mystics attempt to obtain mystical experiences imply that mystical sentences can function descriptively.

The mystic empties his consciousness of all content, whether this be sensations, mental pictures or thoughts. The result is that consciousness is empty even if the mystical experience is, according to Stace, simultaneously described as a "great light". Stace claims that an expression such as "undifferentiated unity" describes this emptiness. As consciousness has been emptied of all content, unity must remain. As no distinctions between separate entities in consciousness can occur, the mystical experience is "undifferentiated". In Stace's view if one uses the methods that the mystic recommends, the result is that which the mystics actually describe. <9>

(iii) Mystical sentences can function symbolically.

According to Stace, mystics sometimes make use of sentences that function symbolically. Examples of such sentences are "a glorious and dazzling obscurity" (Heinrich Suso) and "the shell in which my personality is so solidly encased explodes at the moment of satori" (D T Suzuki). <10>

Symbolic sentences can be translated into sentences that function descriptively. In the example above, Suso's utterances stand for what Stace calls "the vacuum-plenum paradox". The experience is characterized by being both empty and full at the same time. <11> Suzuki's utterance stands symbolically for the disintegration of the ego that mystics experience. <12>

2.1.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

If we accept Stace's later theory that there are actually mystical sentences that function descriptively or can be translated into sentences that function descriptively, it is possible, with regard to the semantic function of mystical sentences, to identify properties of mystical experiences by a scientific method based on the analysis of mystical texts.

2.1.3. Criticism of Stace's Theory

(a) Troy Organ claims that mystics are often spiritual teachers. Language is used for teaching purposes, partly to inspire, partly to evoke mystical experiences in the novice. The mystical sentences do not, therefore, function descriptively. <13> In addition, mystics have, according to Organ, always said that each and everyone must reach enlightenment in his own way. Here Organ mentions utterances by Buddha and Eckhart and asks himself why mystics should try to describe the way they have gone if everybody has to find his own way. Mystical sentences do not, therefore, function descriptively. < 14>

Organ's arguments do not hold. That mystics use mystical sentences evocatively or inspirationally will become apparent to us later. But this fact does not logically exclude the possibility that mystical sentences function descriptively. In addition, it is often inspiring to speak of one's own experiences to others who are on, or wish to enter, the mystical way.

(b) According to Quinten Lance Corbenic, Stace characterizes the introvertive mystical experience as without content. On the other hand, Stace is forced to accept that the mystical experience contains elements of differentiation in order that his ontological theory about "identity in difference" should not be inconsistent. <15> Corbenic asserts, therefore, that the introvertive mystical experience cannot be without

content. If the experience were void of content, then the mystics would not say that it is ineffable or "meaningful though not in verbal terms". <16>

Corbenic also points out how willingly the mystic appears to communicate his experiences. If the mystical experience is completely without content, it is difficult to imagine why the mystic so actively participates in writing, teaching theology, etc. If the mystical experience is meaningful, then it cannot be without content. <17> Mystical expressions such as "undifferentiated unity" and "empty void" cannot therefore be used literally by the mystics, for which reason mystical sentences containing these expressions cannot function descriptively in the way that Stace maintains. <18>

The mystical expressions "darkness" and "silence" are not symbols, Corbenic claims. Stace regards the expressions "darkness" and "silence" as symbols of the emptiness in the mystical experience. But as the mystical experience is not without content, then these cannot, according to Corbenic, be symbols. <19>

Corbenic's criticism does not hold. It is true that Stace claims that the mystical experience is emptied of what he calls "empirical content". But Stace maintains that the experience is at the same time full and is characterized, amongst other things, by unity. The experience of undifferentiated unity can be described, and this is what mystics do, says Stace. Stace thus does not claim that the experience is without content in the *absolute* sense, only in the "empirical" sense. <20>

(c) Certain mystical expressions are unintelligible if they are interpreted literally. What does the concept "undifferentiated unity" mean? asks Corbenic. A unity without parts? Corbenic does not understand what kind of entity this could be. <2l>

Stace has characterized an introvertive mystical experience as being beyond time and space. Corbenic cannot understand what is meant by the concept *non-spatial emptiness.* The same argument can be applied to the concept *nontemporal emptiness.* What kind of emptiness is it that exists beyond time? asks Corbenic. <22> As concepts such as non-spatial/nontemporal emptiness and undifferentiated unity are unintelligible if they are interpreted literally, mystical sentences containing these concepts do not function descriptively.

I must admit that I cannot understand why the concept of *unity* in connection with descriptions of experience cannot be an intelligible one. I content myself here with presenting one counter example. When we see a coloured circle against a white background, many of us, at least in our cultural sphere, perceive that the figure is characterized by the property of unity, but that there are no parts that form this unity. Consequently, the claim that the concept of *unity* must of necessity include division into parts does not hold.

As far as the concepts of nonspatial and nontemporal emptiness are concerned, Corbenic has misunderstood Stace. The mystical experience is not characterized by nonspatial or nontemporal emptiness according to Stace. The mystical experience is characterized by being beyond time and space *and* void of content. That this is so is, I believe, evident from Stace, who, after mentioning *emptiness* when listing the properties typical of introvertive mystical experiences, writes:

> Being nonspatial and nontemporal. This of course follows from the nuclear characteristic just listed. <23>

Thus Stace has never claimed that *emptiness is* nontemporal or nonspatial.

(d) Corbenic asserts that the mystical expressions "fading away" and "melting away" do not, as Stace claims, describe mystical experiences, but experiences during preliminary stages of a mystical experience. The mystic does not maintain that his ego dissolves during the mystical experience. The dissolution of the ego is only experienced during the preliminary stages of a mystical experience. <24> Mystical sentences that contain the expressions in question cannot therefore function descriptively.

(e) According to Corbenic, the mystical words "bliss", "peace", etc. are only expressions of feelings and do not describe properties of mystical experiences. <25> Neither can sentences containing such expressions function descriptively.

It is possible that the mystical phrases "fading away" and "melting away" describe experiences during the preliminary stages leading up to a mystical experience, and that mystics use the words "bliss" and "peace" expressively. The problem arising from Corbenic's argument is, however, that he has not shown that this is the case. He has not shown, by a single example from a particular mystic, that this mystic uses or does not use the expressions in question in the way Corbenic states in a specific linguistic context. It is, for example, possible that the same mystic uses these expressions in *one* way in a specific linguistic context, in *another* way in another linguistic context, and finally, that another mystic uses them in a *third* way in a specific linguistic context. In other words, I should like to know what support there is in mystical texts for Corbenic's views. Corbenic is perhaps referring to the texts that Stace uses, as Corbenic criticizes Stace in this connection. To determine whether Stace's or Corbenic's interpretation of the texts in question is to be preferred it is necessary to have an investigation that takes into account the mystic as a person, the mystical tradition he belonged to, his apparatus of concepts, etc. I shall conduct this kind of investigation and evaluation of Stace's interpretation of the said expressions in Chapter 4, so 1 shall refrain from discussing this matter in more detail here. I may just mention that in Chapter 4 I shall show that on no point does Corbenic's criticism hold.

(f) Stace assumes that if mystical sentences do not function symbolically, they function descriptively. But as we shall see, there are many alternatives. A mystical sentence can, for instance, function expressively or instructively. If a mystical sentence does not function descriptively/symbolically, a mystical experience can neither be identified logically or by a scientific method.

(g) Stace is guilty of drawing false conclusions when he claims that, by studying the methods mystics use to obtain mystical experiences, we can infer that the mystical experience is characterized by specific properties, for instance, undifferentiated unity. It does not logically follow that ridding consciousness of thoughts, mental pictures and objects of perception results in an experience characterized by undifferentiated unity.

(h) According to my contextual interpretation of Stace, a logical relationship exists between the view of the mystical concept of ineffability and the view of the semantic functions of mystical sentences. If, for example, the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable, mystical sentences cannot function descriptively. If mystical language contains untranslatable symbols, as Stace assumes in his intermediate period, the mystical experience must be absolutely ineffable, etc. <26> Stace's functional theory presupposes that the phenomenon of ineffability should not be explained in, for example, absolute terms. Stace therefore implies that the type of explanation that he recommends, and which will be dealt with in the next chapter, is the alternative we should prefer among the rival explanations available.

To sum up: Organ's argument that mystical language functions inspirationally or evocatively, but not descriptively, does not hold. It does not follow that if mystical language functions inspirationally or evocatively that it cannot also function descriptively. I refuted Corbenic's criticism as well. Corbenic has misunderstood what Stace means by the mystical experience being characterized by undifferentiated unity. The experience is not completely empty , only empty of what Stace calls "empirical" content. Neither are the mystical concepts "undifferentiated unity" and "void" unintelligible.

Stace's theory, however, involve some difficulties. It does not follow that if the mystic empties his consciousness of thoughts, mental pictures and objects of perception, that the experience is characterized in a definite way. Stace's theory also presupposes a specific type of explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability. I shall discuss whether this theory is preferable to others in the next chapter. Finally, we can question whether the mystical sentences that Stace presents in support of his theory really function descriptively/symbolically. This will be investigated in Chapter 4 after the problem of ineffability has been discussed, which is the reason why I shall return to a final evaluation of Stace's functional theory.

Today there are two alternative theories to Stace's functional theory. My next task is to give an account of these suggestions and examine them critically.

2.2.1. Evocative Function: Walter T Stace's Theory from his Intermediate Period

(i) The mystical experience is absolutely ineffable.

Stace writes:

> That their vision is ineffable is so common and well-known a claim of the mystics in all ages, countries, and religions, that it is not necessary to document it. <27>

Most people would agree that mystics claim that the mystical experience is ineffable. But not all would agree that the concept of ineffability should be interpreted in the absolute sense, as Stace asserts:

> But the divine mystery is inherent in the divine, a part of the nature of God, and can never disappear. And this means that it is still a mystery even to the mystic who has directly experienced it, nay, even to God Himself. That is why it is ineffable. <28>

(ii) As the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable, mystical sentences cannot function descriptively:

> The translation of religious symbolism into literal language is rendered impossible by the ineffability of religious experience. <29>

(iii) Mystical sentences function evocatively.

To understand how Stace arrives at thesis (iii) 1 have to explain what Stace means by the concept of symbol.

That which characterizes symbolism is, according to Stace, that there is a relationship between two entities, the symbol and what the symbol stands for, symbolizandum. Both the symbol and symbolizandum have to be present in the consciousness of the receiver for the linguistic expression to be regarded as symbolically meant. If, for instance, the symbol but not symbolizandum is present in the receiver's consciousness, the symbol is meaningless. It is not, however, necessary for symbolizandum to be present in an obvious way. It is sufficient that the symbolizandum is perceived vaguely, indistinctly, perhaps even in the subconscious. The vagueness of symbolizandum is often the very reason why we use symbolic language. Stace points out, however, that for the symbol to function it must be possible for the symbolic expression, at least theoretically, to be translated into a literal expression. <30>

The basis of symbolism consists in a similarity between the symbol and the symbol's reference, symbolizandum. An example of a symbolic expression is, according to Stace, Shakespeare's words "taking arms against a sea of troubles". The picture of the sea and its waves is the symbol here, says Stace, while symbolizandum consists in the oppressive nature of problems and their multiplicity. <3l>

Stace asks himself whether we can find symbols and symbolizandum in mystical language. The answer is in the negative to begin with. One of Stace's prerequisites, as we have seen, is that the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable. It is therefore impossible to translate mystical expression such as, for instance, "God is Love" <32> into a literal expression. Mystical expressions, therefore, do not seem to be symbols. But Stace claims, nevertheless, that this is the case, and for the following reasons. If a mystical expression such as, for example, "Godhead", is a symbol, then it should be possible for the receiver to realize what the symbol and "Godhead" stand for. God Himself must therefore be present to the mind of the receiver, if vaguely. Stace claims that the mystical symbols stands for the mystical experience. The sentence "God Is Love" is not a

literal, but a symbolic, "proposition" about God, and God himself is present to the receiver if he understands the sentence in question.

If we understand a mystical sentence, then we understand the symbols via the intellect, and symbolizandum, God Himself, we apprehend with the help of what Stace calls "intuition". Both entities are therefore present in the receiver's consciousness provided that in "consciousness" we include both intellect and intuition. <33>

Stace emphasizes, as we already saw in Chapter 1, that the mystic symbol does not have any meaning:

> The symbol does not mean, but evokes, the experience. For a meaning is, in strictness, a concept; whereas here there is no concept. <34>

By means of intuition, the symbols evoke the mystical experience, which is symbolizandum. It is in this way that understanding, intuitive though it may be, of the symbol occurs. Consequently, mystical sentences function evocatively:

> For they (the mystics) do not seek by their words to communicate their meaning to us, as when a man says "this is a house" or "that is a tree". They seek to evoke a meaning which is already in us. In this sense mystic or religious language is like poetry or music both of which call up what is within rather than describe what is without. The function of religious language ... unlike the function of scientific language ... Scientific language is descriptive, religious language evocative. <35>

The symbol does not evoke the same experience in the receiver as in the sender, but it is usually a vague reflection of this experience.

> The effect of the symbols is that the experiences in the subconscious begin to manifest themselves on the conscious level. <36>

This line of argument presupposes that all people are mystics, as most receivers believe they understand mystical sentences. Stace is aware of this and claims that this is, in fact, so. Stace thinks that the fact that certain persons have not discovered that they have this type of mental functioning Stace calls "intuition", or even deny that they have it, is no argument. Everybody uses intuition without being aware of it or knowing how it works. <37>

A similar answer may, according to Stace, be given to the objection that we do not experience how the subject-object relationship is transcended, something that is characteristic of a mystical experience. For most of us mystical intuition is so vague and obscure, perhaps even subconscious, that we do not understand its true nature. <38>

Stace's theory of symbolism implies that both mystical words that appear to be negative and those that appear to be positive should be interpreted as symbols. Negative words such as, for example. "void", "nothing". express that the experience is ineffable. <39> But if words that appear to be positive, such as "love" and "bliss" are symbols, Stace has to explain why mystics in particular are so partial to using certain expressions and not others. Stace explains this by claiming that, from the symbolical point of view, there are two types of order in reality: the natural and the divine. A mystical word is more what Stace calls "adequate" if the word expresses something that is closer to God's "selfrealization", something that occurs in the mystical experience. The expression "closer" here is naturally also meant symbolically. Accordingly, mystical words such as "awareness" and "bliss" are more adequate mystical symbols than, for instance, "power", which refers more to mechanical, impersonal activities. <40>

Stace's explanation why certain mystical words are more adequate than others implies that mystical symbolism, in contrast to other symbolism, is not based on similarity between symbol and symbolizandum. Stace himself is aware of this. <4l>

Stace does not supply any "proof" for his theory about the adequacy of mystical words because he believes that it is impossible to prove it. Instead, he refers to mankind's "biological" and "moral" intuition about the nature of reality. <42>

Besides the argument that the mystical experience is ineffable, Stace puts forward two more arguments why mystical expressions should be interpreted as symbols and why mystical sentences do not function descriptively:

(iv) If mystical sentences are interpreted literally, paradoxes arise. Mystical sentences therefore cannot function descriptively.

Stace´s analyses utterances from, among others, Meister Eckhart, Jakob Böhme and Vedanta. In the Isa upanishad we can read the following:

> That One, though motionless, is swifter than the mind. Though immoveable, It travels faster than those who run. It moves, and It moves not. <C>

Stace interprets this to mean that the concept of "movement" in this utterance symbolizes the creative power of God, while the "lack of movement" symbolizes the unchangingness of God. According to Stace, the author wishes to show how contradictions arise if one tries to describe God/the mystical experience. The Absolute or God is characterized by unity and infinity. When the intellect tries to comprehend this proposition, this inevitably leads to a paradox. Beyond the infinite nothing can exist. There can be no difference between the world of phenomena and the Absolute. But, on the other hand, there must be a difference, as the Absolute has such properties as lack of relations, unity and absence of distinctions, while the world is characterized by having relations between entities, of multiplicity and of division into objects. The world therefore falls outside the Absolute, yet is at the same time identical with it, which is a paradox. <44> As paradoxes arise if we interpret mystical sentences literally, Stace claims that the words are meant symbolically:

> Thus all conceptions of the relation between God and the world, which have been commonly affirmed by the religious consciousness, must be taken as no more than metaphors, since to take them literally leads to contradictions. <45>

(v)   There are no criteria to help us to distinguish between mystical words that are meant literally and those that are meant symbolically.

Stace is aware of the extremity of claiming that all mystical words are symbols. Only those whom Stace calls "fundamentalists" deny, however, that mystical language contains symbols. But where should the line be drawn between words that are meant literally and those that are meant symbolically, and what criteria should we use to distinguish them, asks Stace. According to him, it is impossible to find such criteria, and he therefore adheres to his own theory of symbolism. The alternative, to accept that all mystical words are meant literally, is a worse one because this means, as already mentioned, that mystical sentences express paradoxes. <46>

2.2.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

If we were to accept Stace's theory from his intermediate period, it would not be logically possible, and consequently impossible using a scientific method, to identify a mystical experience. It is true that we may know intuitively what the mystical experience is, but we cannot formulate this insight in scientific language in the form of descriptions of properties of mystical experiences.

2.2.3. Criticism of Stace's Theory

(a) Stace in his later period criticized his earlier view of the concept of symbol. The substance of this criticism is briefly as follows:

(j) The mystical experience is said to be impossible to conceptualize.

(jj) All symbolism implies a similarity between symbol and symbolizandum.
(jjj) If similarity exists between symbol and symbolizandum, they both belong to the same class of entity.
(jv) It must therefore be possible to conceptualize both symbol and symbolizandum. Otherwise we do not know wherein the similarity lies.

(v) X cannot be a symbol of properties in a mystical experience.

(vj) Mystical language cannot contain symbols in the way Stace has stated in his intermediate period. <47>

Stace's criticism is misdirected as he has misunderstood the meaning of his earlier theory of symbolism. According to Stace in his intermediate period, symbolism is not based on similarity between symbol and symbolizandum, something which he did claim in his later period. <M>

Stace's view of symbols in his intermediate period has been defended by, among others, William Wainwright and Quinten Lance Corbenic, both of whom objected to Stace's later criticism. Wainwright claims that the only thing required for understanding a symbol is that we understand the terms that are included in the figure of speech. The symbolic expression "the sound of a trumpet is like scarlet" is understandable if we know what a trumpet sounds like and what scarlet looks like. On the other hand, it is impossible, and not even necessary for the sake of understanding, to translate this into an expression that is meant literally. As mystics are, according to Wainwright, directly, what he calls, "acquainted" with the experiences they describe, mystical symbols can function in a similar way. <49>

Wainwright also claims that there need not even be any property that connects symbol with symbolizandum for the symbol to function. Most people hold the view, for instance, that all colours have something in common, but it is difficult to determine in what this property consists. <50>

Corbenic claims that symbols do not need to be literally translatable. He finds support here in Alston's concept of *quasi-metaphor.* Typical of a quasimetaphor is that a receiver can only understand its meaning by analogy. Alston cites as an example the sentence "God has punished me", which is distinguished from the meaning in the sentence "My father has punished me" in that we cannot refer to specific observable events. The meaning of the sentence "God has punished me" can only be understood by arguing that it is analogous to the action of one person punishing another. It is impossible for the sender to decide when the receiver experiences that God is punishing him. The quasimetaphor cannot be translated into an expression that is used literally. Corbenic suggests that mystical symbols function as quasi-metaphors. <5l>

(b) Stace in later years has also criticized the previous conception that all mystical words are symbols. The criticism comprises the following:

(j) Mystical sentences that contain symbols are only meaningful and justified if they can be translated into sentences that function literally, alternatively, if symbolizandum is present in the receiver's consciousness.

(jj) The person using a symbol must therefore know what the word symbolizes.

(jjj) There are mystical words that are not obvious symbols.

Stace is aware, as we have seen, that mystics often use symbols. He mentions examples such as *desert* and *darkness*. We all know what is meant by these words. We understand, says Stace, that the symbols stand for the emptiness/ void in the mystical experience. But what do the mystical words "emptiness", "unity", "undifferentiated", etc. stand for?

(jv) If the last cases in (jjj) are said to be expressions that are meant literally, the mystical experience cannot be absolutely ineffable, which is presupposed by the theory of symbolism from Stace's intermediate period.

(v) If the last cases in (jjj) are symbols, then we cannot find symbolizandum.

Here Stace argues as follows. The mystical expression X must be either meant literally or a symbol of the expression Y. Y is then either meant literally, which is logically impossible if all mystical language is made up of symbols, or is a symbol of Z etc. The theory leads to infinite regress.

(vj) Thus, mystical language cannot contain symbols only. <52>

Corbenic has criticized thesis (v):

> For it seems to me that, according to Stace, either 'undifferentiated unity', 'the void', and, etc, are literal descriptions for characteristics of the mystical consciousness or they are metaphors for phrases or words literally descriptive of some aspects of the mystical experience - not metaphors for something else, unless for some reason Stace wishes to call the literal descriptions of certain characteristics of the introvertive experience by the word W. But then, A is itself the characteristic or aspect of the mystical experience we are trying to describe. A is neither literal description nor metaphor, it *is the characteristic itself. So, I* cannot see how the regress which Stace claims can even get started. (Underlining by Corbenic) <53>

A symbolic word stands, according to my contextual interpretation of Corbenic, for a non-linguistic object. Corbenic therefore believes that Stace is wrong when he claims that A stands for a property of a mystical experience. But Stace says explicitly that A, if it cannot be a literal description of a property of a mystical experience according to the theory of symbolism, must symbolize a literal description:

> Either "undifferentiated unity", "the void", "obliteration of multiplicity" and the like, are literal descriptions of the mystical consciousness or they are metaphors for something else. Suppose we call this something else A. Then either A is a literal description or it is a metaphor for B. <54>

I cannot understand, therefore, how Corbenic can interpret Stace to mean that A stands for a non-linguistic object. Corbenic himself adds "unless for some reason Stace´s wishes to call the literal description of certain characteristics of the introvertive experience by the word 'A'".

Stace's argument assumes, however, that symbols can be translated into words that are meant literally but, as we saw under (a), this is not always possible or necessary.

(c) It is very likely that mystical sentences can function evocatively. Berdie and Organ, whom we shall meet in the next section, have found utterances by mystics that indicate this. <55> But Stace claims that all mystical sentences function evocatively. Investigations into how mystics actually use language show, however, that mystical sentences can function in a number of different ways and that many mystical words are not symbols. Stace's theory is characterized by the same either/or philosophy in his intermediate period as in his later one. All sentences either function descriptively or evocatively. Stace has failed to notice that other alternatives exist. <56>

(d) Stace claims that it is logically necessary for a paradox to arise when the intellect attempts to understand the mystical experience, as this experience, viewed symbolically, is characterized by unity, infinity, lack of

relations and absences of distinctions, while the experience of the world is characterized by having the opposite properties. What does Stace mean? There are at least two possible interpretations. The statement about the world's characteristics can be used literally. For a paradox to arise, however, two logically contradictory propositions are required. But if the statement about the world is used literally, Stace is comparing a proposition with a sentence that contains untranslatable symbols. Sentences containing untranslatable symbols cannot, however, be propositions as we cannot determine what is asserted. For a paradox to arise, therefore, it is necessary to interpret words like "infinity", "unity" etc literally. But as these words are not used literally, according to Stace, no paradox can arise.

The alternative interpretation is that the world's characteristics should be understood symbolically. But no paradox can arise here either. Stace, then, compares two sentences that both contain untranslatable symbols, with the result that we do not know what is really asserted and wherein the paradox lies.

(e) Even if mystical texts contain paradoxes, these paradoxes may possibly be solved. Such solutions have been suggested and I shall look into some of then in section 3.1.3. If the paradoxes could be solved, one of the arguments that Stace puts forward in favour of the theory of symbolism as the one to be preferred would become invalid.

(f) Acceptance of Stace's theory involves our preferring his explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability to rival theories.

To sum up: Stace in his later years criticized his earlier view concerning the question of function and claims that mystical sentences have the same characteristics as sentences that function descriptively. But, as we have seen, objections may be raised against this theory. Stace's criticism that it should be possible to translate the mystical symbols literally does not hold either. Neither has Stace shown that mystical sentences contain paradoxes. Besides, many paradoxes may possibly be solved. The alternative, that all mystical sentences function evocatively, not literally, does not hold either. Other investigations have shown that mystical sentences do not function only evocatively. Finally, the theory also contains an assumed explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability, one that logically excludes the possibility of mystical sentences having a descriptive function.

The conclusion to be drawn from my critical examination of Stace's theory from his intermediate period is that the theory involves difficulties. Let us see if Troy Organ's functional theory is preferable.

2.3. 1. Inspirational, Evocative or Expressive Function: Troy Organ's Theory

(i) The mystical experience <57> is absolutely ineffable.

Organ writes:

> I take seriously the statements of mystics that they cannot communicate their experiences and insights; therefore when the mystics speak, 1 conclude that rather than contradicting by their practice what they hold in theory, they are using language in a non-communicative fashion. <58>

(ii) Mystical sentences therefore cannot function descriptively.

(iii) Mystical sentences function inpirationally, evocatively or expressively:

> The mystics speak to motivate, to stimulate, to arouse others to seek their own enlightenment through their own mystical experiences. The mystics do not attempt to convey some information, and then discover that they are unable. <59>

... the language of mysticism is an emotional language. <60>

Mystical sentences can, in other words, either function inspirationally, to inspire other people to reach enlightenment, or evocatively to arouse mystical experiences in others, or finally, expressively to express feelings.

Organ asserts that the best example of evocative function is to be found in Zen Buddhism; what are known as "koans" are used in Zen monasteries to shock the pupil, to get the pupil to abandon his habitual ways of thinking and thereby to call forth mystical experiences. <6l> An example of a koan is the sentence "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" <62>

It is true that mystical sentences sometimes appear to be propositions about reality, but the use of metaphysical propositions is, according to Organ, only a means of inspiring the novice and of evoking mystical experiences. <63> Organ refers here to James Pratt and to Rudolf Otto's discussion of metaphysical propositions in the writings of Sankara and Meister Eckhart. Being, which Eckhart and Sankara sought, is a redeeming reality. "Sat" in Hinduism and "Esse" in Christian mysticism stand for the truth and the good. The concept of "enlightenment" includes a specific view of reality, but then as a means, not a goal. The reason for spiritual exercises is not to see reality as it is. The goal of the mystic is redemption from sin, despair, etc. When the mystic has gained enlightenment, he uses the language to inspire others to seek enlightenment and to evoke mystical experiences in others. <64>

Organ also finds support for the-evocative function of mystical sentences in utterances by Eckhart:

> If anyone does not understand this discourse, let him not worry about that, for if he does not find this truth in himself he cannot understand what I have said - for it is a discovered truth which comes immediately from the heart of God. <65>

Organ does not mention any example of a mystical sentence that has an expressive function, but refers to Stephen C Pepper and Henri Bergson, who both speak of mystical experiences in terms of love. <66>

2.3.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

If we accept Organ's functional theory, it is not logically possible, and consequently not possible by a scientific method either, to identify a mystical experience, as mystical sentences function neither descriptively nor symbolically.

2.3.3. Criticism of Organ's Theory

(a) According to Peter Moore, it is a fact that a great deal of mystical language functions descriptively. The reason why Moore can claim this is that he interprets the concept of ineffability in a different way to Organ. Moore does not think that the ineffability of the mystical experience should be interpreted in the absolute sense. <67> I shall discuss the phenomenon of ineffability in the next chapter. Here I should only like to emphasize that Organ's functional theory presupposes a specific explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability, an explanation that Organ gives no reason for but simply takes as his starting point.

(b) Peter Moore is of the opinion that, to be able to inspire others to enter the mystical way or to be able to express the experience in emotional words, it is necessary for the receiver to know what is recommended or what is expressed. The mystic therefore has to describe his experience and, consequently, mystical sentences can function descriptively. <68>

This question concerns the important relationship between descriptive/symbolic function and other functions. Moore is right in that, to be able to use mystical sentences in a non-descriptive/non-symbolic way, it is necessary that both the sender and the receiver should have roughly the same knowledge of what is happening in a speaking situation for understanding to occur. Moore thereby refers indirectly to the question of what public the mystic writes for. Mystics often write for novices within an order, a monastery or other religious group. It can hardly be doubted that the receivers in these groups have a certain amount of mystical experience themselves and can therefore understand the mystical sentences. The knowledge of mystical experiences that Moore believes should be conveyed via sentences with a descriptive/symbolic function exists therefore without the sentences in mystical texts functioning descriptively/symbolically. In other words, it is not logically necessary for mystics to use sentences descriptively/symbolically in order to use sentences with an inspirational or expressive function.

(c) An objection that we met in connection with Organ's criticism of Stace's functional theory from his later period is that it does not follow that, if mystical sentences can function, and actually do function, inspirationally, evocatively or expressively, they cannot function descriptively. It can often be inspiring, for example, to acquaint oneself with the experiences of others.

(d) Organ's theory contains a contradiction. Organ has to interpret the mystic's talk of ineffability literally to be able to state that mystics claim that the mystical experience is ineffable. But if the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable, nothing can be said about it, not even that it is ineffable.

2.4. Short Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter I have given an account of and discussed three theories about the semantic functions of mystical sentences. Only one of them, that of Stace in his later period, enables identification of mystical experiences, logically and scientifically, by allowing that mystical sentences can and do function descriptively. The reasons put forward by Stace are first that investigations of specific mystical texts show that there are mystical sentences that have those characteristics that are typical of sentences with a descriptive function, and not typical of sentences with a symbolic function. In the second place, mystical sentences with a symbolic function can be translated into sentences with a descriptive function. In the third place, an investigation of the methods that a mystic uses to obtain mystical experiences shows that mystics should obtain the type of experience that they actually describe if the sentences are interpreted descriptively.

But Stace's theory involves difficulties. It does not follow that the mystical experience should be characterized in a definite way because the mystic uses a specific method for achieving mystical experiences. It is also difficult to claim that mystical sentences function descriptively if the concept of ineffability should be interpreted in the absolute sense.

Stace in his intermediate period claims that mystical language does not function descriptively. The reasons are that the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable and that mystical language, if it is interpreted literally, would give rise to paradoxes. To avoid regarding the mystical language as paradoxical, Stace suggests that it consists of untranslatable symbols. These untranslatable symbols are used by the mystic to evoke mystical experiences in the receiver. Mystical language therefore functions evocatively.

The theory is beset with difficulties. That mystical language contains paradoxes is contradicted by the proposition that the symbols are untranslatable. Moreover, solutions to mystical paradoxes have been suggested. Investigations have also shown that mystical sentences function non-evocatively, and that the alternative need not be that mystical sentences either function descriptively or evocatively. In addition, Stace's theory contains the assumption that the mystics talk of ineffability should be interpreted in the absolute sense.

Troy Organ claims that mystical language functions inspirationally, evocatively or expressively, but not descriptively. The reasons for this are, first of all, that the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable. In the second place, Organ argues that mystics often are spiritual leaders. They then use the language for the purpose of teaching, for instance, by inspiring others to enter into the mystical way or to arouse experiences in the receiver.

Organ's theory is not free from objections. From the discovery that mystical sentences function inspirationally, evocatively or expressively we cannot draw the conclusion that they cannot function descriptively. Organ's theory also contains the same prerequisite explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability as Stace in his intermediate period, namely that the mystical experiences is absolutely ineffable, an explanation for which Organ has not put forward any arguments. Moreover, at least one sentence in mystical language functions descriptively, that is the proposition that the mystical experience is ineffable. For mystics not to use mystical sentences descriptively and at the same time claim that the experience is absolutely ineffable is contradictory.

These are the results I have reached so far. As we have seen, both Stace and Organ claim that there is a logical relationship between the semantic functions of a type of mystical sentence, on the one hand, and the view of the phenomenon of ineffability, on the other. But this relationship is, in my opinion, not logically necessary. It does not follow that if mystics say that the experience is ineffable that the sentences they then utter cannot function descriptively. How the mystic says he uses language is one thing, how he actually uses it is another. There exists no logically necessary relationship between these two entities. For any logical relationship to exist between the view of the phenomenon of ineffability and the functions of mystical sentences, it is necessary for us to decide to take the mystics talk of ineffability as authoritative. We have to decide to allow the mystics propositions concerning ineffability to govern our investigation of the semantic functions of mystical sentences. Only then can a logical relationship between the view of ineffability and the semantic function occur.

To elucidate this argument and to able to form an opinion about the fruitfulness of allowing the propositions of the mystics to govern our investigations, I shall briefly discuss Stace's method of interpreting mystical texts. In my view, Stace in later years and the other theorists in question have arrived at divergent views regarding the possible descriptive function of mystical sentences as a result of the different methods they employ. In his intermediate period, Stace analysed mystical texts from the starting-point that the mystics are right when they assert that the mystical experience is ineffable. Stace interpreted the mystics talk of ineffability in absolute terms, and on the basis of this view Stace then attempted to decide what functions mystical sentences actually have. As Stace assume that the mystical experiences were absolutely ineffable, however, mystical sentences could not in fact function descriptively. Stace writes in *Mysticism and Philosophy:*

> *Theorists have supposed that the impossibility of using concepts during the experience is also characteristic of the remembered experience...* But, since mystics do in fact use words about it, it has been wrongly supposed that they can only be symbolic. (Stace's italics) <69>

In his later period, Stace has, in my view, used another method. Stace now investigates, first how the mystics actually use language, not how they themselves say they use it. Stace then discovers, as we have seen, that mystical sentences often function descriptively. The mystical experience therefore cannot be absolutely ineffable. So Stace attempts to explain the phenomenon of ineffability in a psychological way, something that we shall become acquainted with in the next chapter. The result of the investigation into how mystics actually use language governs Stace's view of the phenomenon of ineffability in his later period, in contrast to what was the case in his intermediate one:

> If we assert that the language of the mystic... is basically literal and a correct description of
> what he experiences, what becomes of ineffability? <70>
> ... the common view that it is the *conceptual* character of the understanding which is the source of the
> trouble... has been shown to be erroneous (Stace's italics) <7l>

Organ has the same point of departure as Stace in his intermediate period. He assumes that mystics literally believe that the mystical experience is ineffable. Organ interprets the talk of ineffability in absolute terms and concludes that mystical sentences cannot function descriptively. Organ then investigates what functions mystical sentences could conceivably have.

Organ and Stace in the intermediate period have concluded that mystical sentences do not function descriptively without first investigating how the mystics actually use mystical language. It is therefore logically and actually possible, using such a method, that the mystic used mystical language descriptively without us discovering it. It is in this connection that I believe we should regard the research efforts of Stace in his later years. Stace then discovered that if one investigates how mystics actually used mystical language, one obtained a different result than when one decided in advance that mystical sentences cannot function descriptively. I am therefore of the opinion that the later method of Stace is the better one, with one important reservation. The explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability put forward by Stace in his later period must prove to be the one we should prefer to rival theories. In the next chapter 1 shall investigate whether this is the case. 1 shall therefore return to the question of methods in section 3. 10.

In my treatment of the functional theories 1 have not discussed or criticized the views of the different philosophers on the concept of ineffability. A more detailed and final evaluation of each functional theory and of the logical possibility that mystical sentences function descriptively, and if it is scientifically possible to identify a mystical experience cannot, therefore, be made until we know what is meant by the concept of ineffability, that is, not until Chapter 4. A presentation and critical examination of different explanations of the phenomenon of ineffability is the theme of the next chapter.

Notes

1. See, for instance, Hatab 1982 and Hoffman 1960, who both adopt and start from a theory of use. However, Hoffman also puts forward arguments against mystical sentences being able to function descriptively/symbolically, which is not based on his adoption of a theory of use. He argues that as mystical language contains paradoxes it follows that mystical sentences cannot function descriptively/symbolically (Hoffman 1960, pp 69-70). But as we shall see, mystical language does not only contain paradoxes. For instance, there are mystics who haven't uttered any paradox at all. Also, there have been many attempts to solve the paradoxes. See 3. 1. 1. and 3.1.3.
2. Frederick J Streng is a scientist who presents arguments explaining why mystical sentences primarily function evocatively, instructively, metaphorically, negatively, etc. Streng is also open for the idea that mystical sentences can function descriptively. However, he does not put forward any argument for this. (See Streng 1978)
3. Prabhavananda & Manchester 1957 , p 51. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 88.
4. Stace 1960a, p 300
5. Stace 1960a, p 299-300
6. Otto 1976, p 80. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 63
7. Stace 1960a, pp 302-303
8. Stace 1960a, pp 300-301
9. Stace 1960a, p 300
10. Ibid
11. Stace 1960a, p 256
12. Stace 1960a, p 300
13. Organ 1963, pp 425-428
14. Organ 1963, pp 426,429
15. Corbenic 1978, pp 353-354
16. Corbenic does not state from where the quotation is taken, but it is obvious that he is referring here to Arthur Koestler's utterances in "The Invisible Writing". See Koestler 1954, p 352 Quoted in Corbenic 1978, p 333.
17. Corbenic 1978, pp 333-334
18. Corbenic 1978, pp 353,362
19. Corbenic 1978, p 333
20. For an elucidation of Stace's concept of contentlessness, see Wainwright 1981, p 155.
21. Corbenic 1978, p 340

22. Corbenic 1978, p 338
23. Stace 1960a, p 110
24. Corbenic 1978, p 364
25. Corbenic 1978, pp 364-365
26. Stace 1960a, pp 290-291,294
27. Stace 1952a, pp 32-33
28. Stace 1952a, p 37. Se also Stace 1952b, p 229.
29. Stace 1952a, s 91. The concepts "religious experience" and "religious language" are, according to Stace, synonymous with "mystical experience" and "mystical language", respectively, as religion is the same as mystical religion to Stace.
30. Stace 1952a, pp 63-64
31. Stace 1952a, p 63
32. To Stace the expressions "God" and "mystical experience" are synonymous: "Just as Nirvana simply is the supreme experience of the Buddhist saint, so God simply is the supreme experience of the Christian mystic" (Stace's underlining. Stace 1952a, p 22. See also Stace 1952b, p 237) Elsewhere Stace argues that "God" is a name of the mystical experience or an interpretation of it. See Stace 1952a , pp 21-23.
33. Stace 1952a, pp 64-66. By the word "intuition" Stace means a feeling or a conviction which is actualized in consciousness in a direct manner and which is not a product of thought (Stace 1952a, p 107).
34. Stace 1952a, p 91
35. Stace 1952a, p 86
36. Stace 1952a, pp 91-92
37. Stace 1952a, p 66
38. Stace 1952a, pp 66-67
39. Stace 1952a, pp 33, 42, 49-51. See also Stace 1949-1950, p 29
40. Stace 1952a, pp 96-115
41. Stace 1952a, pp 95-96.
42. Stace 1952a, pp 105-115
43. Quoted in Stace 1952a, p 159. Stace has not given a more exact source.
44. Stace 1952a, pp 159,161-162
45. Stace 1952a, p 74
46. Stace 1952a, pp 52-54
47. Stace 1960a, p 293
48. See Stace 1960a, pp 292-293. See also Stace 1952a, pp 95-6 where he dismisses the theory of analogia entis. Frederick J Streng has also misunderstood Stace's theory in the intermediate period in the same way (Streng 1978, p 151).
49. Wainwright 1981, p 146
50. Ibid
51. Corbenic 1978, pp 345-346. See also Alston 1964, pp 103-106
52. Stace 1960a, pp 293-294
53. Corbenic 1978, p 339
54. Stace 1960a, p 294
55. Berdie 1979, pp 98-99
56. See also Vogel 1953, pp 282-286
57. Organ has not stated any definition of the concept of mystical experience. As Organ explicitly criticizes Stace's theory, he must, however, have adopted at least some of the characteristics which Stace explicitly mentioned in his definition of mystical experience. Otherwise Organ's criticism would not be applicable as Stace and Organ would have had different types of experiences in mind. As my analytical apparatus is applicable to Stace's theory, it can also be applicable to Organ's.
58. Organ 1963, p 426
59. Organ 1963, p 426. See also Organ 1975, pp 157-158
60. Organ 1963, p 435. It is possible that Organ is referring here to evocative function, but this is not stated in this place. Organ discusses the evocative function ten pages earlier. Therefore, I have interpreted Organ's words contextually to mean that he is arguing that mystical sentences also function expressively.

61. Organ 1963, p 429
62. According to Organ, from the works of D T Suzuki. Organ does not give a more exact source. Quoted in Organ 1963, p 429.
63. Organ 1963, pp 430-432
64. Organ 1963, pp 431-434
65. Blakney 1941, p 232
66. Pepper 1942, p 133. Referred to in Organ 1963, pp 435-436, Bergson 1954, p 42. Referred to and quoted in Organ 1963, p 436.
67. Moore 1978, pp 102-105
68. Moore 1978, p 102
69. Stace 1960a, p 298
70. Stace 1960a, p 303
71. Ibid

3. The Ineffability of the Mystical Experiences

The Problem

To defend the claim that it is possible to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method it is not sufficient to solve the problem of meaning and function. Stace also has to explain the mystic's talk of the ineffability of the mystical experience. If the concept of ineffability mean that the mystical experience is, for example, logically ineffable, then mystical words cannot describe mystical experiences, thus excluding the possibility of identification either logically or by a scientific method. To allow identification Stace has to show that the mystics do not mean that the mystical experience is ineffable, or that it is not ineffable in a sense that would exclude the possibility of identification by a scientific method.

The explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability put forward by Stace in his later years is a psychological one. The mystical experience is not really ineffable, but the mystic believes that it is because he has confused the ineffability of the experience with its paradoxically. As the mystical experience is not really ineffable, this paves the way for identifying mystical experiences by a scientific method.

There is another reason why we ought to study the phenomenon of ineffability. As we saw in the previous chapter, all three of the function theories presented assumed that there is a logical relationship between the view of the phenomenon of ineffability, on the one hand, and the view of the logical possibility of mystical sentences functioning descriptively, on the other. To be able to evaluate the three function theories it is therefore important that we should explain what is meant by the statement that the mystical experience is ineffable.

Material and Analytical Apparatus

One of the tasks in this chapter is to classify the explanations of the phenomenon of ineffability in my material. Several other classifications have been suggested earlier. <l> My classification will only include theories that are relevant to the main problem. This means, among other things, that I limit myself to dealing only with those theories that discuss the ineffability of the mystical *experience* and not of the ineffability of, for example, the mystical ontological object.

The theories in my material have been classified in the following way: <2>

(a) The mystical experience is not ineffable. Talk of its ineffability is due to the mystic confusing the ineffability of the mystical experience with its paradoxicality. Representative: Stace in his later period. I shall call this explanation "the theory of psychological ineffability". The theory has been criticized by Douglas Ralph Berdie, Quinten Lance Corbenic, J Moussaieff Masson and T C Masson, Bimal Krishna Matilal, William J Wainwright, William E Kennick, Jack C Carloye, Peter Moore and Leo Robertson.

(b) The mystical word "ineffability" is used by the mystic to express (i) that the experience is very intense, or (ii) that the mystical experience is contentless, or (iii) that all experiences are in a sense ineffable or (iv) that it is necessary for the receiver to be in a specific situation in order to understand the mystical sentences. This theory is represented by Ninian Smart and will be called "Smart's multiple explanation".

(c) The mystical experience is only ineffable in relation to the system of concepts that the mystic has had access to. In the future the mystic may be able to construct concepts that will enable the experience to be described. Representatives: Paul Henle and Galen Pletcher. I shall call this explanation "the theory of conceptual ineffability". The theory has been criticized by V C Aldrich and Richard Hubert Jones.

(d) The mystical experience is ineffable to the non-mystic because the non-mystic has not had any mystical experience and therefore does not know what the mystical words refer to. Representatives: William James, C J Ducasse and Edgar Sheffield Brightman. I shall call this theory "the theory of non-experiential ineffability". The theory has been criticized by Stace in his later period.

(e) Mystical experiences are characterized by very subtle feelings and are therefore ineffable. As far as I know this theory has no representative <3>, but it has been elucidated by Stace in his later period. The theory was then criticized by him, too, and has also been criticized by B Matilal, and will be called "the emotion theory".

(f) The mystical experience is ineffable because the mystic mainly uses the right half of the brain during the experience, the half in which the linguistic function is not normally found. Representative: Jerome D Frank. The theory will be called "Frank's neurophysiological explanation".

(g) The mystic has chosen not to conceptualize the mystical experience because he is afraid that the words can become a substitute for the experience itself. Richard Gale has suggested this solution, and it will be called "Gale's pedagogical explanation".

(h) The mystical experience is ineffable because mystical experiences are comparable to preverbal regressive experiences of breast-feeding. Raymond Prince and Charles Savage have put forward this psychoanalytically-inspired explanation. The theory has been criticized by Nils Björn Kvastad, and will be called "Prince and Savage's psychoanalytical explanation".

(i) The mystical experience is logically ineffable because it is non-dualistic in character, in contrast to language, which is dualistic by nature. Walter T Stace in his intermediate period and Richard Hubert Jones represent this theory, which I shall call "the theory of logical ineffability" The theory has been criticized by Stace in his later period and also by Richard Gale and Walter Arnold Kaufman.

None of the theories that I shall present deal with the problem of identification. One of my tasks is therefore to clarify the implications for the main problem of accepting one or other of these theories. After giving an account of each theory in the material and subjecting it to a critical analysis, I shall conclude my presentation with a discussion of what theory may be considered as preferable and the implications for the problem of semantic function and the identification problem.

3. 1. 1. Psychological Ineffability: the Theory of Stace in his Later Period

(i)   The mystical experience is ineffable while it is in progress because it is characterized by undifferentiated unity.

Stace takes as his starting-point the question of whether the mystic, with his talk of ineffability, means that the experience is ineffable while it is in progress or whether ineffability applies only after the experience is over. According to Stace, the mystical experience is logically ineffable during the time the mystic is exposed to it because it is characterized by undifferentiated unity. To be able to form concepts, at least two entities must exist because the formation of concepts is based on distinguishing one entity from another. As no entities can be distinguished from another in a mystical experience, the experience cannot be conceptualized. The experience is therefore logically ineffable. <4>

As we shall see, Stace has not altered his position from that of the intermediate period as far as this question is concerned. But he gives another reason. Instead of saying that the experience is characterized by unity in a symbolic sense, Stace now talks of it being characterized by unity in a literal sense.

(ii) The mystical experience is not ineffable after it is over as sensory perception is not characterized by undifferentiated unity.

According to Stace in his later period, it is possible to talk about the mystical experience after it is over. The mystic then finds himself in the ordinary state of consciousness and is able to contrast this with the mystical one. The mystical experience is then one among many and can therefore be conceptualized. The mystic describes the mystical experience in terms of "unity", "void", etc. Stace claims that the mystic, despite his talk of ineffability, is actually using some mystical sentences in a descriptive manner, something that I have already reported in the previous chapter. <5> Stace asserts the mystic must therefore be mistaken when he says that the mystical experience is ineffable.

Stace's explanation of how this occurs is as follows:

(iii) The mystic believes that the mystical experience is ineffable because it is chararacterized as being paradoxical. <6>

To explain the relationship between mystical paradoxes and utterances concerning ineffability, Stace sets out from an analysis of the concept of "understanding". According to him, this concept may have three aspects: (a) the act of distinguishing one entity from another, (b) the act of finding similarities between separate entities and (c) logical rules that govern (a) and (b).

By (a) he means that consciousness distinguishes entities from each other, for instance, by characterizing one entity as red, another as blue. This procedure is fundamental to forming concepts.

But the act of distinguishing one entity from other entities is not a sufficient condition for the formation of concepts. We form, for example, the concept of redness by discovering that there are a number of entities that are similar to each other. Aspect (b) is therefore a necessary condition for forming concepts.

The acts of distinguishing entities from each other and of finding similarities between them take place, says Stace, in accordance with the "laws" of logic for instance, the law of identity, the law of contradiction and the law of the excluded middle.

Stace claims that (a)-(c) are not only logical, but also actual, distinctions. <7> It is therefore possible that concepts may be formed without regard to the laws of logic. Stace now asserts that this is exactly what happens with the mystic. The mystical experience is characterized by having the properties of x and non-x simultaneously. So the mystical experience does not follow the law of contradiction and is consequently expressed as a paradox. As mystical sentences function descriptively and are correct descriptions of the mystical experience, the proposition that the experience is characterized by the properties of x and non-x is a true one. In comparison with sensory perception, the mystical experience is a paradoxical experience. <8>

Stace is aware that certain philosophers would not agree that the sentence "A is B and A is not B" is a proposition, but that the sentence is meaningless. Stace refutes this point of view. He argues that these philosophers have confused the question of the meaning of a sentence with the question of its truth. The laws of logic concern the question of truth and not that of meaning. The law of contradiction states that if two propositions are logically contradictory, they cannot be true at the same time. One of the sentences must be true and the other false. The sentence "A is B and A is not B" is therefore not meaningless but false. A sentence that is false cannot be meaningless. Moreover, if both the sentences "A is B" and "A is not B" are meaningful, the connective "and"' between them does not, according to Stace, make the compound sentence meaningless. <9>

When the mystic attempts to describe the mystical experience, what Stace calls a "mystical paradox" occurs. <10> Examples of such paradoxes are: the proposition that God is both identical and not identical with the world, what is known as the "pantheistic" paradox; that Unity both has and does not have properties, is

personal and non-personal and is both static and dynamic, what is known as the "plenum-vacuum paradox"; the paradox that the mystic's ego has dissolved and yet remains and the paradox in the extrovertive mystical experience that the objects of perception are seen as both multiple and one, as both identical and distinct from one another. < 11 > An example of the latter is to be found, says Stace, in the passage from Meister Eckhart quoted earlier: <2>

> All that a man has here externally in multiplicity is intrinsically One. Here all blades of grass, wood, and stone, all things are One. This is the deepest depth. <0>

The argument supporting the claim that mystical experiences are really characterized by paradoxicality is, according to Stace, that the paradoxes cannot be solved. In his view, the theories that claim to solve the paradoxes are difficult to defend. Consequently, there is only one possible interpretation of the mystical paradox, namely, that the mystical experiences are paradoxical in character. <14>

The relationship between the mystical paradoxes and the mystics talk of ineffability may now be expressed as follows. A mystic that wishes to speak about the mystical experiences is then in the non-mystic, ordinary state of consciousness. He discovers then that what he expresses appears to be paradoxical. He then has to choose to deny one of the following propositions:

1. The laws of logic are applicable to all experiences.
2. Linguistic expressions can describe all types of experiences.

According to Stace, the mystic chooses to deny 2. That is why the mystical experience is said to be ineffable. But Stace claims that the mystic makes a mistake here. Instead, the mystic should deny proposition number 1, that is that the laws of logic are applicable to all experiences. Mystical words do describe the mystical experience that is paradoxical in character correctly. In other words, the mystic has drawn the erroneous conclusion that the occurrence of mystical paradoxes implies that the mystical experience is ineffable. <15>

(iv) Mystics appear to be confused when they talk of the mystical experience.

Thesis (iv) supports thesis (iii) according to Stace. The mystic is not aware of the mistake he is making, but he feels that something is wrong. <16> Stace mentions a number of mystical utterances in which he believes we can discern that the mystics are confused when describing their own experiences.

3.1.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

The explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability that Stace supplies in his later years implies that mystical experiences are not ineffable in the real sense. It is therefore possible to use a scientific method to identify properties of mystical experiences, with regard to the phenomenon of ineffability, by studying mystical utterances.

3.1.3. Criticism of Stace's Theory

(a) Stace's theory is based on the assumption that mystical sentences contain paradoxes. If one can show that mystics do not express themselves paradoxically while still claiming that the mystical experience is ineffable, then Stace's theory is very problematical. Moreover, if it is possible to show that the paradoxes can be solved, that is, that they are pseudo-paradoxes, Stace's theory would be weakened even more. Douglas Ralph Berdie has tried to show all this.

Berdie has analysed the utterances in the Chandagya Upanishad and of Plotinus, Meister Eckhart and St. John of the Cross, material that was also used by Stace. The result of Berdie's investigation is as follows. In the Chandagya Upanishad, there are paradoxes but no mention of ineffability. <17> In Plotinus and Eckhart Berdie found both paradoxes and utterances about ineffability. <18> Some researchers argue, however, that Eckhart does not express himself paradoxically. When Eckhart, for example, writes that "in God exists neither this nor that <19>, C F Kelley thinks that "this" and "that" refer to separate entities, something that cannot characterize God, as God is "all-possibility and all-inclusive". Therefore, Eckart does not express himself paradoxically. <20>

Nils Björn Kvastad thinks that a mystical experience of anything personal according to Eckhart should be classified as an experience of God, while an experience of an impersonal character should be classified as an experience of the Godhead. An experience of fullness should be classified in the same way as an experience of God and one of a void as an experience of the Godhead.

Similarly, says Kvastad, Eckhart stated that God was dynamic, the Godhead static. As the predicates that are regarded as contradictory belong to different aspects of the mystical experience, the paradox disappears according to Kvastad.<2l>

Finally, as far as St John of the Cross is concerned, Berdie has found utterances about ineffability but no paradoxes. <22> Moreover, St John of the Cross is aware that other mystics have used paradoxes and tries to explain them in various ways, Berdie says. <23>

Berdie came to the conclusion that only one mystic in the material, Plotinus, has both expressed himself paradoxically and claimed that the mystical experience is ineffable. Stace's theory thus meets with serious difficulties.

Philip C Almond's and Ninian Smart's investigations of the vacuuumplenum paradox support Berdie's result. In Theravada Buddhism, Jainistic mysticism and Sankhya/Yoga, this paradox is absent. <24> Sankara has, according to Almond, solved the paradox by introducing a distinction between saguna and nirguna Brahman, Mahayana Buddhism by the doctrine of trikaya <25> and the Eastern church by the distinction between God's essence, on the one hand, and His uncreated energy penetrating the creation, on the other. <26>

(b) Berdie has also criticized Stace's claim that mystics feel confused about the descriptions they give of their experiences. There is nothing that indicates that this is the case, says Berdie. Eckhart even claims that the paradoxes do not worry him at all:

> Things impossible in nature may be usual or natural in a realm above nature. <27>

However, it is not evident from this quotation or from its linguistic context that Eckhart is talking about mystical paradoxes. Not to be able to find something in creation is not the same as its being paradoxical in character.

Berdie asserts that mystical paradoxes should not be interpreted literally. According to him, this is supported by the fact that the mystic considers the mystical experience to be ineffable. <28> Moreover, St. John of the Cross attempt at solving mystical paradoxes implies that they should not be interpreted literally. Also, the author of the classical work "Cloud of Unknowing" (about 1370) writes:

> Be careful that you do not interpret the spiritual things I am saying in literal terms. <29>

Berdie concludes that the connection that Stace thought he saw between paradoxicality and ineffability finds no support in the mystical texts. <30>

(c) According to Quinten Lance Corbenic, the mystical utterances that Stace cites in support of his theory show that the problem does not lie in the fact that the mystical experience is paradoxical in character, but in the fact that the mystics are more likely to claim that they are unique and are completely unlike ordinary, non-mystical experiences. Stace himself has admitted that the mystical experience cannot be understood in terms of ordinary non-mystical experience, but has not, says Corbenic, realized what the consequences of such a viewpoint are. When the mystic attempts to describe the experience with the help of the concepts and categories that we use to describe ordinary, nonmystical experiences, problems arise. So the mystic says that the experience is ineffable. <3l> Corbenic says that it is evident that this explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability is more fruitful than that of Stace from, among other things, the quotation that Stace gives of the Buddhist D T Suzuki, who writes about "lokauttara", the transcendent reality, in the following way:

> ... when language is forced to be used for things of this world jokauttara, it becomes warped and assumes all kinds of crookedness: oxymora, paradoxes, contradictions, contortions, absurdities, oddities, ambiguities, and irrationalities. Language itself is not to be blamed for it. It is we ourselves who, ignorant of its proper functions, try to apply it to that for which it was never intended. <32>

What Suzuki comments on in this passage, says Corbenic, is not that the experience is paradoxical in character, as Stace claims, but that it cannot be described with the concepts of normal language, which is quite another thing. <33> According to Corbenic, the same argument can be applied to Stace's interpretation of an utterance from the Upanishads. In it Brahman is talked of as without qualities, called "nirguna Brahman". Nirguna Brahman is described as "neti, neti", which translated into English is "not this, not that". If the experience is paradoxical in character, the words "this, but not this", for example, should be used instead. Corbenic therefore prefers to interpret the proposition "not this, not that" as meaning that the mystic claims that the concepts we use to describe non-mystical experiences cannot be employed for describing introvertive mystical experiences. <34> It is very likely, Corbenic concludes, that if the mystic tries to describe a mystical experience with the help of the concepts of ordinary language, paradoxes will occur. Mystical paradoxes are not descriptions of properties of mystical experiences. <35>

(e) Stace has based his arguments on discussion of the paradoxes in the introvertive mystical experience. According to Corbenic, however, a genuine paradox occurs not in the introvertive but in the extrovertive mystical experience. In the extrovertive mystical experience the introvertive state of consciousness is integrated with a non-mystical, ordinary one. Two systems of concepts, one for each type of experience, are therefore used to describe this type of mystical experience. Hence, what seems to be a paradox arises. The world is seen both as unity and as multiplicity. The two systems of concepts cannot overlap. What is a true proposition in one need not be so in the other. What the mystics require, therefore, is another linguistic model to assist them in their descriptions, Corbenic maintains. <36>

Stace attempts to show that that the introvertive mystical experience is also paradoxical. He interprets the mystical expressions "undifferentiated unity", "void", "nothing", etc. as literal descriptions of mystical experiences. We have already seen that Corbenic does not interpret these mystical expressions in the same way and need not repeat that discussion here (see 2.1.3). The question is, however, whether Stace can find any mystical expressions that logically contradict the positive expressions presented above. Here Stace suggests the positive mystical expressions "fading away" and "melting away", which according to him symbolically express that the ego ceases to exist as a separate ego. Corbenic interprets these expressions differently, as we know (2.1.3). The expressions in question describe experiences during stages preliminary to the mystical experience and not the mystical experience itself. Nor can Stace assume that the ego dissolves completely, as his ontological theory of "identity in difference" would then be inconsistent.

Stace's other examples are the mystical expressions "divine" and "bliss". We have seen Corbenic's different interpretation of these, too (2.1.3). These words do not describe experiences but function as expressions of feelings. Corbenic draws the conclusion that Stace has not shown that the introvertive mystical expressions are characterized by the property of paradoxicality. <P>

As I mentioned in Chapter 2 (see 2.1.3), it is possible that Corbenic's interpretations of the four mystical expressions above are preferable. But Corbenic has not proved that this is the case by referring, for example, to mystical texts.

(f) Corbenic claims that Stace has not shown that the introvertive mystical experience and the non-mystical, ordinary experience are experiences of the same "world". It is true that Stace says that the introvertive mystical experience has a "transubjective" cognitive status, that is that it is not subjective. But it is not objective either according to Stace. Corbenic argues that if the nonsubjective "world" that is manifested in the introvertive mystical experience is not identical with the "world" that is manifested in the objective, non-mystical experience, no paradox can arise. <38>

One of the suggestions for solving mystical paradoxes rejected by Stace is "The Theory of Double Location". <39> For his criticism to be tenable, Corbenic has to show that Stace's argument against this theory is untenable. Corbenic has not done this.

(g) William J Wainwright claims that Stace's arguments against the laws of logic being applicable to the mystical experience of unity is untenable, for two reasons:

(A) According to Wainwright's interpretation of Stace a proposition is true in every possible world if, and only if, this possible world contains at least two entities. <40> But the mystic has no access to a world that is not our own, says Wainwright, only to an underlying reality for our world. <41 > As monism as a theory of reality is dismissed by Stace <42>, propositions about "the One" are propositions about entities in our own world. The laws of logic thus appear to be applicable to propositions about "the One", argues Wainwright. <43>

(B) According to Wainwright, there are many mystical propositions that seem to be contradictory and deal with experiences consisting of at least two entities. Here he mentions the examples "God and the world are distinct and identical" and "Each distinct item in the world is One". It should be possible to apply the laws of logic to these propositions, which then become false of necessity. Stace understood this but did not succeed. says Wainwright, in showing how to avoid the conclusion that these propositions are false of necessity. Stace's arguments are, according to Wainwright, as follows:

(B1) If the laws of logic can be applied to the proposition s and s is contradictory, then s is false of necessity.
(B2) The laws of logic can be applied to propositions expressing something about experiences consisting of at least two entities.
(B3) The two mystical propositions quoted express something about experiences consisting of at least two entities.
(B4) The mystical propositions are contradictory, from which follows that
(B5) The mystical propositions are false.

Stace seems to claim, says Wainwright, that (B3) is false, that is that mystical propositions do not express anything about more than one entity. <44>

(B6) When one reflects on (B1-B4) one is in the ordinary, non-mystical, state of consciousness.
(B7) Propositions (B1-B4) appear to be true to the ordinary consciousness.
(B8) To the mystical consciousness one or more of the propositions (B1-B4) appear as false or neither true nor false.

Even if (B6) and (B7) are true, it does not follow from these that (B1), (B2), (B3) or (B4) is false, Wainwright asserts. However, as far as (B1) and (B2) are concerned, Stace does not say this either. When the mystic does not have a mystical experience, he accepts the laws of logic. Thus the mystic accepts (B1) and (B2).

Wainwright claims that (B1) is false, as the mystical experience is characterized by unity, from which follows that no proposition about mystical experiences can be true or false or neither true nor false, as then the mystic cannot be in the unity state of consciousness. <45>

Wainwright also discusses some objections that Stace could conceivably make. Stace writes that the mystic sees *"through* the space-time world to the unity, the One, which lies behind and beyond it ... (and which) is identical with the One of the introvertive experience". (Staces's italics)<46> The mystical proposition "Each item in the world is one" would therefore refer to a unity component in the extrovertive mystical experience. In this case (B3) would be false. According to Wainwright, this argument founders on the fact that one of the mystical utterances that Stace uses unequivocally speaks of several entities, namely: "sticks and stones, blades of grass". By rephrasing the mystical proposition "the world is and is not identical with God" as "the world is and is not distinct from God", we see that the latter is a description of an experience that includes multiplicity. So even here the mystical proposition is contradictory and false. <47>

Wainwright has misunderstood Stace here, however. Stace does not claim that mystics do not experience multiplicity in the extrovertive mystical experience. What Stace does claim is that multiplicity is experienced as both multiplicity and unity, where the latter element is the one that is specifically mystical. Experience of the world of multiplicity follows the laws of logic, while experience of unity does not. Stace writes:

> ..we must distinguish the sensuous physical part of the extrovertive mystic's experience from the unity which is the only mystical part of it, and which is undifferentiated and therefore nonlogical. <M>

To summarize, Stace has not shown that the laws of logic cannot be applied to propositions about mystical experiences of unity, or that mystical propositions can be contradictory and true at the same time, Wainwright argues. Contradictory propositions are of necessity false. Mystical propositions do not appear to be an exception to this rule, he concludes. <49>

(j) William E Kennick claims that the fact that mystical paradoxes are genuine and true does not necessarily imply that there are experiences that do not follow the rules of logic. The reason is that if it is true that the rules of logic cannot be applied to mystical experiences, the mystics utterances do not contain genuine paradoxes, as genuine paradoxes are logical paradoxes, and logic could not be applied to mystical experiences. If, on the other hand, the mystical paradoxes are genuine paradoxes, they are of necessity false, and we cannot therefore show that the mystical experiences do not follow the laws of logic. <50>

(k) Jack C Carloye has criticized Stace's view of the meaning of contradictory sentences. According to Carloye, the fact that a contradictory sentence is of necessity false does not depend on our ability to decide whether it refers to something real or not, but depends on the meaning of the sentence. By means of our semantic rules, we interpret the meaning of a proposition by deciding under what conditions the proposition is true. To deny a proposition by negating it is to limit the semantic interpretation we can make of it. A proposition in the form of "not S" cannot have a fact as a condition for truth that is compatible with the condition for truth that applies for "S". If "S" is true, "not S" must of necessity be false. To interpret "not S" in such a way that it would be possible for "not S" to be true when "S" is true would make "not S" meaningless, as the expression "not" would have lost its meaning. <5l> Our capacity to decide whether a sentence is true or not has thus nothing to do with whether a contradictory sentence is false or not. If a contradictory sentence is meaningful, then it is of necessity false. <52>

Stace is also mistaken if he assumes that contradictory sentences are false because the world does not resemble the description given in the sentence. Irrespective of what the world looks like, says Carloye, a contradictory sentence is either false, if it is used correctly, or meaningless, if it is used incorrectly. Contradictory sentences do not describe the world at all.

Carloye concludes that, irrespective, of whether we interpret the mystical paradoxes as meaningless or of necessity false, they cannot describe a mystical experience. <53>

(1) Bimal Krishna Matilal claims that the fact that most mystics attempt to put their mystical experiences into words, and that mystics thus follow the laws of logic, argues against Stace's proposition that the mystical experiences are paradoxical. Here Matilal mentions mystics such as Meister Eckhart, Samkara and the Buddhist school Madhyamika. According to Matilal, the last of these uses a logical method to show that ordinary, non-mystical, experiences cannot provide us with knowledge of reality without our getting involved in contradictions. In this way, Madhyamika wishes to point out the ultimate transcendant Reality. <54>

(m) As we shall see in the next chapter, Peter Moore asserts that mystical writings may be divided into three categories, (I) autobiographies, (II) classifications of mystical experiences, not necessarily based on the author's own experiences and (III) theological treatises unconnected with mystical experiences. <55>

Moore claims that an investigation of mystical writings shows that paradoxes are quite common in theological treatises, are significantly less common in classifications of mystical experiences and hardly occur at all in autobiographies. This means that the fewer descriptive sentences there are in a text, the greater the chance of finding paradoxes. This implies, says Moore, that sentences containing paradoxes probably cannot function descriptively, not even if the paradox occurs in texts that seem to describe mystical experiences. In addition, paradoxes can probably be explained with the help of the same type of theory used to explain paradoxes in non-mystical texts. Moore concludes that if sentences containing paradoxes function descriptively, we should also have heard more about the paradoxes in autobiographies than we have actually done. <56>

Unfortunately, Moore has not specified in detail what mystical and mystical texts he has investigated. Nor has he shown, by referring to mystical texts, that the number of paradoxes varies with the type of material. Finally, he has not specified how the paradoxes should be solved.

(n) Hitherto, I have only criticized theories that have explicitly criticized Stace. I shall also mention some alternative explanations of mystical paradoxes. <57>

Frederick J Streng claims that, as the ultimate reality in most non-Buddhist religions is, from the point of view of definition, regarded as transcending the world and is beyond all description, paradoxes arise when the mystic attempts to describe the mystical experience. The mystical experience is characterized by undifferentiated unity, while language contains concepts whose task is to divide and classify. Linguistic concepts are also governed by the laws of logic.

Streng thus accepts an explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability in terms of what I have called "the theory of logical ineffability". His explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability then controls his view of mystical paradoxes. <58> Streng has not shown, however, that the concept of ineffability should be interpreted in terms of logical ineffability.

Kvastad has suggested two alternative theories that could explain mystical paradoxes. <59> The first is that the mystic uses one or both of the components of a paradox symbolically. The paradox would thus cease to exist. <60>

Unfortunately. Kvastad has not produced any support for his theory by referring to specific mystical texts.

The second alternative theory states that paradoxes are included in a method of arousing mystical experiences in the novice. Kvastad mentions koans in Zen Buddhism in this connection. The koan paradox,

which is actually not strictly contradictory, makes the novice confused and makes it easier for him to have mystical experiences. <6l>

Kvastad has also discussed the necessity of accepting the law of contradiction. The result of not accepting it is that it would be impossible to define the concept of mystical experience in terms of properties. At the same time, the properties that are ascribed to the experience must be denied, from which follows that a definition cannot be given. <62>

This is as far as criticism of Stace's view of mystical paradoxes goes. <63> In Chapter 4 I shall return to a closer analysis of the mystical utterances that Stace presents in support of the idea that mystical language contains paradoxes and that mystical sentences containing paradoxes function descriptively.

My next task is to give an account of other criticism of the theory of psychological ineffability.

(o) Matilal does not believe that the distinction between whether the mystical experience is ineffable during or after the experience is a fruitful one. He thinks that the mystical experience can only be called ineffable in a trivial sense during the course of the experience, that is, that the mystic is silent in the same way as a man becomes speechless with love. <64>

Berdie says, however, that Stace's distinction and the reason he puts forward for making it are supported by the utterances of mystics. Plotinus writes:

> At the movement of touch there is no power whatever to make any affirmation; there is no leisure; reasoning upon the vision is for afterwards. <65>

> When you see The Good, see it entire; later you may think of it and identify with The Good whatever you can remember. <66>

Meister Eckhart explains:

> .... a man must himself be One, seeking unity both in himself and in the One, experiencing it as the One, which means that he must see God and God only. And then he must 'return', which is to say, he must have knowledge of God and be conscious of his knowledge. <67>

Finally, St. John of the Cross says that experience of bliss

> …comes to pass in a greater degree than it is possible for the soul to describe at the time when this flame (living flame of love) uprises in it. <68>

(p) Leo Robertson does not agree with Stace when the latter claims that mystics are poor logicians, philosophers and analysts. Plotinus, Dionysius, Areopagite, St Augustine, Sankara, Meister Eckhart, Jakob Boehme, Nicolas of Cusa or St John of the Cross - none of these can be regarded as poor philosophers, says Robertson. It is not likely, therefore, that mystics would have difficulties with language without knowing it. On the contrary, Robertson asserts, many of them, including Plotinus, explain what is meant by the concept of ineffability. According to Plotinus, the mystical experience is logically ineffable because the mystical ontological object transcends the intellect.

Robertson also criticizes the proposition that the mystical experience is ineffable only while the experience is taking place. It is difficult to explain how the memory, when the mystical experience is over, can trace multiplicity and distinctions in an experience that Stace himself has characterized as one of undifferentiated unity, transcending all distinctions and relations. <69>

To sum up: the examinations carried out by Almond, Berdie, Kvastad and Smart has shown that many mystical texts do not contain paradoxes, that any paradoxes that exist could be pseudo-paradoxes, and that there are mystics who do not express themselves paradoxically but who still speak of the ineffability of the experience. Carloye, Kennick and Wainwright claim that contradictory mystical sentences must of necessity be false. Kennick has even pointed out that if mystical experiences are regarded as not following the laws of logic, then descriptions of them can hardly be illogical but alogical. Moore believes that mystical paradoxes mainly occur in writings that do not describe mystical experiences. But his ideas are so far only hypothetical.

Streng claims that the ultimate reality in non-Buddhist religions is defined as transcending the world of phenomena, and that language does not describe experiences of this reality, as this reality is characterized by unity, while language is based on distinctions. Streng has not shown, however, that the concept of ineffability should be interpreted in terms of logical ineffability, which his arguments presuppose. Kvastad suggests two ways of solving paradoxes. The first one implies that one or both components of a paradox consist of symbols. Kvastad has not mentioned any support for this theory, however. The other suggestion is that paradoxes are included in a method of arousing mystical experiences in the novice. The latter alternative is supported by Matilal's arguments. According to Matilal, paradoxes are used in, for example, the Madhyamika school for teaching purposes and do not represent descriptions of mystical experiences. Matilal also claims that many mystics put their mystical experiences in words, which indicates that these experiences are not paradoxical.

Corbenic asserts that mystical experiences are quite different from nonmystical ones in character. The mystical experience cannot be understood in terms of ordinary experiences. Stace has admitted this, says Corbenic. Consequently, it is unlikely that the paradoxes are literal descriptions of mystical experiences. Corbenic rejects the support Stace has presented in the form of utterances from Suzuki and from the Upanishads. Nor do paradoxes occur in the introvertive mystical experience, according to Corbenic, but in the extrovertive one. Corbenic's criticism is, however, based on another interpretation of the semantic functions of mystical sentences, an interpretation for which he has not indicated any support.

Stace believes that it is possible to conclude from the mystics utterances that they felt confused when they tried to describe their experiences. Berdie's investigations have, however, shown that this is not the case. Nor is it a fruitful exercise to distinguish between what happens during and after the experience, according to Matilal and Robertson. The latter has also commented that many mystics, in spite of Stace's maintaining the opposite, have been good analysts. It is therefore unlikely that they have had difficulties with language without their knowing it. Also, many of them explain why the mystical experience is ineffable. Finally, Robertson finds it hard to understand how, after a mystical experience, the memory can trace multiplicity and distinctions in an experience that Stace characterizes as having the property of undifferentiated unity.

It is obvious that there are great difficulties involved in Stace's theory. Let us therefore see whether the alternative theories available to us are preferable.

3.2.1 Ninian Smart's Multiple Explanation

Smart has presented his view on the ineffability of mystical experiences mainly in four works: "Reasons and Faiths " (1957), "Being and the Bible" (1956), "Understanding Religious Experience" (1978) and "The Purification of Consciousness and the Negative Path" (1983). Smart deals with different areas of use for the mystical word "ineffable" in different works. My contextual interpretation of Smart is that we should pay attention to all these areas of use to be able to claim that we have analysed the phenomenon of ineffability in an adequate and complete way.

The four areas of use that Smart mentions of are as follows:

(i) Smart argues that during the mystical experience there is a very great feeling of bliss. <70> The word "ineffable" expresses the magnitude of this feeling. Here Smart draws a parallel with experience of pain.

When someone says "The pain is indescribable", he does not mean that the pain is indescribable in principle, but that certain pain is so intense that we call it "ineffable" in order to express this intensity. At the same time, the word "ineffable" expresses something else as well. Words cannot describe such intense pain completely adequately. It is not enough to say "The pain is very, very, very bad". Repeating words that reinforce an expression is insufficient. But by using such words of reinforcement we express something that cannot be described adequately. A mystical sentence may contain the word "ineffable" as a word of reinforcement, and the sentence function, to use my terminology, expressively. <7l>

(ii) When the mystic says that the bliss is ineffable, he does not mean that it is difficult to describe. For a description of the mystical experience to be possible, there must be what Smart calls a "mental picture" to describe. But the mystic asserts that the mystical experience is characterized neither by mental pictures, sensory perception nor thinking. <72> St Theresa writes:

> The soul neither sees, hears nor understands while she is united to God. <U>

Smart concludes that the word "ineffable" may indicate that there is nothing to describe, as the experience has no content. <74>

(iii) All experiences are ineffable in the sense that there is always something more to say about them. An experience has an infinite number of aspects. Smart suggests that this is what mystics may mean when they say that the mystical experience is ineffable. <75>

(iv) The word "ineffable" expresses the idea that apart form normal understanding of language the receiver must have a specific disposition to be able to understand mystical words and sentences. The effect of the Holy Spirit is an example of such a disposition. <76>

3.2.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

If we should find that, in a specific linguistic context, the word "ineffability" can/should be interpreted according to alternative (i), then identification, as far as the phenomenon of ineffability is concerned, is possible using a scientific method. The sentence in which the expression "ineffable" is included functions expressively, not literally, in this context. Consequently, the mystical experience is not said to be ineffable. If alternative (ii) is preferable, identification by a scientific method is also possible because the words here are describing properties of experiences. Identification is, however, limited to properties that do not describe the content of the experience. Alternative (iii) enables scientific identification even if this cannot claim to be complete. If, on the other hand, we find that alternative (iv) is preferable, the logical possibility of identification is not excluded, but using a scientific method is. Anyone researching into mystical experiences has to be a mystic to be able to understand mystical texts. To be sure, he knows what characterizes the mystical experience, but he cannot formulate a description in scientific language as it is hard to maintain that all those researching into mystical experience need to be mystics, a requirement that I have discussed previously. I am therefore forced to conclude that this alternative does not allow identification. <77>

3.2.3. Criticism of Smart's Theory

(a) Gary E Kessler and Norman Prigge also argue that the mystical experience is ineffable because it has no content. They find support for their view in the results of earlier researchers and in the utterances of the mystics themselves. The concept of undifferentiated unity put forward by Stace in his later period implies that, in a mystical experience, the mystic transcends the relationship between subject and object. Kessler and Prigge argue that if the subject-object relationship has been transcended, then it is likely that the experience is without content. They also find the "empty" mystical experience in R C Zaehner's classification of mystical experiences in what they call "soul mysticism". The mystic says that he has achieved an experience

of pure consciousness, often expressed in terms of *self* or the realisation that Atman is identical with Brahman. Buddhists often speak of *nothingness,* and the theistic mystic Eckhart <78> writes:

> 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... <79>

Finally, Agenanda Bharati, mystic and researcher into mystical experiences, says that

> …there is zero content of a cognitive sort in the experience. <80>

Kessler and Prigge therefore draw the conclusion that the mystical experience is ineffable because there is no content to describe. The fact that the mystical experience is ineffable does not affect the properties of the experience. So, according to Kessler and Prigge, it is possible to describe it as having no object, no content, as being ineffable, etc. <8l>

I do not believe that either Smart or Kessler and Prigge have shown that the mystical experience has no content. True, the question of non-content depends on how they define the concept of *content.* Unfortunately, neither Smart nor Kessler and Prigge have given any definition of this kind. It does not follow, however, from the fact that thoughts or "mental pictures" are missing or that the experience is not a perceptual one that the experience has no content. Nor does it follow from the fact that the mystic experiences undifferentiated unity that the subject-object relationship has been transcended. As we have seen previously (see 2.1.3), Stace in later' years did not regard the mystical experience as being absolutely without content. Consciousness can contain other elements besides objects of perception/thoughts/mental pictures, etc.; it can obtain, for example, feelings or, as Wainwright suggests, Reality, One or what we usually call the "non-reflecting ego". The latter is not an object in an experience, but certainly a content. Monists often say that they meet the "real ego" in the mystical experience, and Wainwright thinks that this expression could be a description of this type of self-experience. <82>

D T Suzuki dismisses the idea that the mystical Buddhist word "nothingness" stands for the emptiness of the experience:

> The satori cannot be a phantasm, empty and contentless, and lacking in real value, while it must be the simplest possible experience perhaps because it is the very foundation of all experiences. <83>

Bharati does not believe that the mystical experience contains any "cognitive" element. The expression "cognitive" is ambiguous, but I interpret Bharati contextually to mean that the concept does not imply the absence of emotions. In that case, Bharati would claim that the mystical experience is void of cognitive, but not of emotional, content.

Smart and Kessler & Prigge were partly able to defend themselves by referring to their cognitive theories, which are of the same reductionist type as that of Stace in his later period. According to this theory, names for God and words such as "atman" are then not included in descriptions of mystical experiences but represent intellectual additions. But, as I mentioned in section 1.1.9., this kind of cognitive theory is beset with great difficulties. When mystics speak in terms of God, for example, these terms are often related to the experience. <84> The mystical experience is therefore not usually without content.

Another argument against the mystical experience being contentless is that both Smart and the colleagues Kessler and Prigge assume that there is an element of bliss in the experience. <85> To be sure, Smart argues that the mystical word "bliss" functions as an expression of an emotion, not a description <86>, but how can we know that the experience is characterized by bliss if the word is not also used literally? Therefore, the mystical experience cannot be contentless.

One way to weaken a theory is to give an example of a phenomenon that the theory claims to explain but obviously does not explain. Allow me to quote an utterance made by the mystic J A Symonds:

> One reason why I disliked this kind of trance was that I could not describe it to myself. I cannot even now find words to render it intelligible. <87>

It is obvious that Symonds experience had a content. Otherwise he would hardly have been irritated at not being able to describe it. He simply would have said that there was nothing to describe. Neither the theory of Smart nor that of Kessler and Prigge can be applied to Symonds utterance, hence they are incomplete. Nor is it possible to try and explain Symonds utterance by referring to other meanings of Smart's concept of ineffability. Here Symonds does not use the expression "ineffable" as a word of reinforcement. It is also evident from the utterance that Symonds is confused about the ineffability of this experience in particular, not about the ineffability of all experiences. The fourth meaning, that the receiver is required to have a specific disposition to be able to understand his utterance, cannot be applied either. It is Symonds himself that cannot describe the experience. The four meanings of the word "ineffable" that Smart discusses therefore do not cover all mystical utterances adequately.

Despite its faults, the theory of Kessler and Prigge has shown the importance of distinguishing between properties associated with content and those that are not. In Chapter 4 we shall become aware that this distinction, which in my material is only put forward by Kessler and Prigge, is of importance to the discussion of both the phenomenon of ineffability and the problem of identification.

(b) As far as alternative (iii) is concerned, it may be pointed out that the mystics speak of the mystical experience as being ineffable. They do not claim that all types of experiences are ineffable, which implies that there is something special about the mystical experience, something that is not included in other experiences. It is thus not fruitful to explain the ineffability of the mystical experience by referring to a general theory on the ineffability of all experiences. <88>

(c) As regards alternative (iv), it can be said that the theory is interesting but unproven. Smart has not mentioned any support for the theory by, for example, referring to specific mystical texts.

(d) Smart has, in my opinion, explicitly indicated the importance of not regarding the concept of ineffability as univocal but as one that can be used in different ways in different linguistic contexts. This an advantage of the theory. Hence, various explanations of the phenomenon of ineffability need not logically exclude one another. As we shall see later, this view is of great significance to the understanding of the phenomenon of ineffability and to the discussion of the problem of identification.

To sum up: neither Smart nor Kessler and Prigge have shown that the mystical experience is contentless. It is not likely that mystical experiences are ineffable just because all experiences are in a sense ineffable, as the mystics appear to believe that there is something specific about the ineffability of mystical experiences. Nor has Smart mentioned any support for the idea that the word "ineffability" is used as a word of reinforcement or that the receiver must possess a specific disposition to be able to understand mystical words/ sentences. Objections can therefore be raised against each of the four meanings of the word "ineffability" that Smart deals with. Nor can the theory explain all mystical utterances about ineffability and is therefore incomplete. On the other hand, the theory is useful in that it shows the importance of the principle that the word "ineffability" may be used in different ways in different linguistic contexts.

3.3.1. Conceptual Ineffability: the Theory of Paul Henle <89>

Henle's explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability means that the mystic cannot make use of words to describe the mystical experience because the conceptual apparatus to which he has had access is too limited. To clarify what he means, Henle uses a brilliant analogy that I shall briefly describe below.

We may imagine that there was a "primitive" tribe that had developed linguistic characters for numbers, addition and subtraction. They also had a rudimentary knowledge of algebra, but used geometrical figures instead of, the letters that we use. While we, for example, write "a" or "b", they used the characters " A " and "L". Addition was indicated by a plus sign over the operation itself. ,a" + "b" was symbolized by L+. This way of symbolizing addition means that it is not possible to distinguish "a + b = b + a" from "a + b = -a + V as E] = E], which expressed the law of identity. <90> The "orthodox" within mathematics and almost all other people only accepted the law of identity and a law for addition, which we need not go into here. However, there were a few individuals that maintained that there were other laws of addition. When requested to formulate these laws, they often responded by writing E = E They were naturally accused of simply expressing the law of identity, but they claimed that there were occasions when the formula was not a tautology. Of course, most people thought that they were only talking nonsense. <9l>

But a time came when even the law of identity was attacked. Usually the process of addition consisted in the calculator placing a twig in a clay pot, two twigs in the next pot, three in the third, etc. and using the contents of the clay pots as a basis for his calculations. <92> Subtraction was done by taking twigs from one clay pot and putting them in another. By using a third set of clay pots it was possible to count with minus numbers.

A young genius thought he had discovered a general law for minus numbers.

By using the symbol E for "b - a" he claimed that E is not equal to E, i.e. "b - a" is not identical with "a - b". The young man was accused of violating the law of identity and was executed. <93>

To sum up: in this primitive language, it is impossible to formulate certain propositions without this resulting in a tautology or a contradiction. Hence, that which is to be expressed is ineffable in relation to this specific language. <94>

This is a difference, however, between the primitive mathematical language and our own much more developed language. Henle therefore tries to show that even our language can be inadequate for expressing a phenomenon. When a new phenomenon appears, for example, through human inventions or discoveries, we often describe this phenomenon by analogy to a fact that is already known. When a name was required for the thing covering the motor in a car, the choice fell on the concept of *hood,* which is analogous to the original meaning of the concept.

But, Henle goes on, not all phenomena can be described with the help of analogy. We cannot describe everything completely with the help of, for example, the concept *hood.* In relation to the concept *hood,* the content of the sentence "There are some coins lying on the table" is ineffable. In other words, our linguistic symbols limit what can be expressed. <95>

Henle believes that it is possible that the mystics talk of the ineffability of mystical experiences may be interpreted to mean that the experience is impossible to describe, by analogy or otherwise, with the help of those concepts that exist in the language the mystic has access to. Henle has no direct way of confirming his theory but says there is what he calls "indirect support". If the theory were adequate, it would be possible for mystical language to contain paradoxes and tautologies. Every researcher knows that this is the case, says Henle. An example of the former is provided by Exodus: "I am that 1 am". According to Henle, Jacob Bottomley's words "Oh God ... What shall I speak of thee, when speaking of thee I speak nothing but contradiction" show how aware the mystic is of the fact that mystical sentences contain paradoxes. <96>

According to Henle then, it is possible that the mystical experience is characterized by properties that cannot be described with the help of the concepts that the mystics have had access to up till now. However, as long as the system of concepts in the languages in question is not altered or expanded, we shall never be able to confirm Henle's theory. Henle himself is aware of this. In the same way as the primitive language mentioned

above was regarded as "primitive" in comparison with our own language, it is necessary to compare our language with a language that contains other concepts to be able to decide whether there are "candidates for a proposition" <97> in our language that could express propositions that in relation to our language are ineffable.

3.3.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

As the theory claims that it is possible to describe mystical experiences if other concepts than have been available hitherto are formed, it is logically possible, if we accept Henle's theory, to identify a mystical experience. On the other hand, it is not possible to identify mystical experiences by a scientific method until the mystics have formed these new concepts. Henle's theory allows us to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method, but not in the present state of research.

3.3.3. Criticism of Henle's Theory

(a) Galen Pletcher, who is a- representative of this theory too, has tried to support it by referring to the utterances of certain mystics. Pletcher cites Plotinus, who writes the following about the mystic:

> …we ought not even to say that he will *see,* but he will *be* that which he sees, if indeed it is possible any longer to distinguish seer and seen, and not boldly to affirm that the two are one. In this state the seer does not see or distinguish or imagine two things; he becomes another, he ceases to be himself and to belong to himself ... Therefore this vision is hard to describe. For how can one describe, as other than oneself, that which, when one saw it, seemed to be one with oneself? (Pletcher's italics) <99>

According to Pletcher, what Plotinus is saying here is that the concept of *experience* presupposes a distinction between subject and object. An experience in which subject and object cannot be distinguished cannot be expressed in our system of concepts. <100>

I agree that here Plotinus is saying that the mystical experience is such that it cannot be described in our language. But Plotinus does not write that the reason for this lies in the fact that the language he had access to was conceptually limited. A representative of the theory of logical ineffability could therefore also use this quotation of Plotinus in support of his theory. Plotinus does not say whether the reason for ineffability is logical or conceptual.

Pletcher also cites Aldous Huxley. who after describing his mystical experience of a chair in terms of identity, writes:

> To formulate and express the contents of this reduced awareness, man has invented and endlessly elaborated those symbol-systems and implicit philosophies which we call languages. Every individual is at once the beneficiary and the victim of the linguistic tradition into which he has been born - the beneficiary inasmuch as language gives access to the accumulated records of other people's experience, the victim in so far as it confirms in him the belief that reduced awareness is the only awareness and as it bedevils his sense of reality, so that he is all too apt to take his concepts for data, his words for actual things. <101>

According to Pletcher, Huxley's utterance also provides support for Henle's theory. < 102> But I find this difficult to understand. Neither in the quotation nor in its linguistic context does Huxley speak of ineffability but of the tendency of language to hinder us from being open for mystical experiences, which is something different. Huxley's utterance cannot, therefore, support Henle's theory.

Douglas Ralph Berdie also believes that he has found support for the theory of conceptual ineffability in mystical texts. He cites Nicholas Cusanus, who says that God is the actualization of all possibility, but that

> ... we have no common medium by which to attain to the relationship, since the possibility is infinite and indeterminate, whereas the actuality is finite and determined ... (Therefore) He is above our concept. <l03>

I do not understand how this passage can be cited in support of the theory of conceptual ineffability. Cusanus says that God cannot be described conceptually. He does not say that the mystical experience cannot be. It becomes even more obvious if one reads the whole passage from which the quotation is taken that Cusanus is speaking of God here and not about mystical experiences. For the quotation to provide any support for Henle's theory, Cusanus also needs to claim that it is the present linguistic system that is inadequate. But Cusanus does not do this.

(b) V C Aldrich claims that, if Henle is right, the history of mysticism would be full of attempts to form new concepts that can describe the mystical experience. But this is not the case, says Aldrich.

Henle has answered this criticism and argues that innovations do not arise of necessity. What is required is that "inspiration" wells up and the mystic feels a need to describe his experiences. He does not believe that any insight into semantic issues occurs during the course of the mystical experience. <104>

Richard Hubert Jones supports Aldrich's criticism. The mystics do not attempt to form new concepts. If we disregard minor attempts, such as the expression "one with the mystical" and the development of a new meaning of the mystical word "one", new mystical concepts are notably absent. Not even such great philosophers as Eckhart, Plotinus and Sankara had any ambition to form new concepts, says Jones. <105> An additional argument that Jones states is that the propositions about the ineffability of the mystical experience have not ceased despite these attempt to introduce new concepts. <106>

(c) Mystical language does not only include tautologies and paradoxes. It also contains apparently positive words, such as "infinite", "peaceful", "eternal", etc. The theory does not explain how these mystical words should be interpreted if they are not interpreted positively.

Moreover, it is possible that mystical paradoxes can be solved. something that we saw in connection with Stace's later theory. I have not been able to check or to analyse the linguistic context of the mystical sentences that Henle thinks support his theory as he has not stated the source. However, Henle has not shown that the passages cited should be considered as mystical sentences.

To sum up, it may be said that Henle's, Pletcher's and Berdie's support of the theory is untenable. I cannot find any support for the theory in the passages that are cited. A problem that the theory does not explain is that mystics have not generally attempted to form new concepts but have used ones from the religious tradition they belong to or from profane language. Nor does the theory explain the occurrence of apparently positive expressions in mystical language. It is also doubtful whether any genuine mystical paradoxes exist.

3.4. 1. The Theory of Non-experiential Ineffability

This theory has been put forward by William James, C J Ducasse and Edgar Sheffield Brightman and is based on the requirement that to be able to understand linguistic expressions that describe experiences we should have had these types of experiences ourselves. Just as it is impossible to get a blind man to understand, for example, what red looks like, or a deaf man to hear what a piece of music sounds like, it is impossible to communicate the mystical experience to the "spiritually blind", non-mystic, as he has had no mystical experiences of his own and cannot therefore understand what the mystical words refer to. Thus, the mystical experience is ineffable. <107>

3.4.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

It is impossible to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method if we accept the theory of non-experiential ineffability. Even if the researcher is a mystic himself, he cannot study the experience according to a scientific method. To be sure, he knows what characterizes the mystical experience, but he cannot formulate a description in scientific language, as it is hard to maintain that all those researching into mystical experience need to be mystics, a requirement that I have discussed previously. <108>

3.4.3. Criticism of the Theory of Non-experiential Ineffability

Stace, in his later period, has criticized the theory as follows:

(a) The result of accepting the theory is that all experiences, perceptual or mystical, are ineffable if one has not experienced that which the concept stands for. But, according to the mystics, the property of being ineffable is something that is unique to the mystical experience, something that does not encompass other experiences. Thus, the theory does not explain why the mystical experience is ineffable. <109>

(b) A person who can see has no difficulty in understanding and expressing propositions of the type "X is red" to a blind person. It is the blind man who has difficulty in understanding the concept of redness. As far as the ineffability of the mystical experience is concerned, however, the problem is that the mystic himself, that is the person who has had the experience, is unable to describe it. The theory therefore does not explain what it is meant to explain, says Stace. In support of the above argument, Stace cites the mystic John Addington Symonds, a quotation that we have met before: <110>

One reason why I disliked this kind of trance was that I could not describe it to myself. 1 cannot even now find words to render it intelligible. < 111 >

The theory of non-experiential ineffability cannot explain Symond's talk of the ineffability of the mystical experience. However, I think there are some other utterances from mystics to which the theory can be applied. The following utterance from Teresa of Avila is one example:

> This state of prayer ...Anyone who has had experience of this kind of prayer will understand quite well what 1 am saying if, after reading this, she considers it carefully, and thinks out its meaning: otherwise it will be Greek to her. <112>

3.5.1. The Theory of Emotion

This theory is not represented by anyone, as far as I know, but it has been elucidated and discussed by Stace in his later period.

The theory is based on the fact that feelings are always difficult to describe. In comparison with thoughts, for example, they are vaguer and more indeterminable. Thus, all feelings are, to a certain extent, ineffable, but the degree of ineffability depends on how deep and subtle the feelings are. The theory of emotion claims that the mystical experience is difficult to describe because the experiences, that is the feelings, are so subtle. The experience is therefore said to be ineffable. <113>

3.5.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

The theory of emotion does not claim that it is logically impossible to describe mystical experiences. But according to my contextual interpretation of Stace's presentation of the theory, the mystics have not yet

succeeded in finding words to describe the mystical feelings adequately. Consequently, the theory of emotion is similar to the theory of conceptual ineffability. As it is possible that mystics will be able to find words that describe mystical words adequately at some future date, it is possible, if we accept the theory of emotion, to identify a mystical experience, with regard to the phenomenon of ineffability, using a scientific method. But identification cannot be carried out in the present state of research.

3.5.3. Criticism of the Theory of Emotion

(a) Stace in his later period criticizes the theory of emotion and claims that the mystical experience is not characterized by being only emotional or that its emotional aspect is of great importance. Stace mentions both Eckhart and Buddha, whose mystical experiences are, according to him, characterized by calm and serenity rather than by strong feelings. < 114> Eckhart, for example, relates the following:

> Satisfaction through feeling might mean that God sends us as comfort ecstasies and delights. But the friends of God are not spoiled by these gifts. Those are only a matter of emotion, but reasonable satisfaction is a purely spiritual process in which the highest summit of the soul remains unmoved by ecstasy, is not drowned in delight, but rather towers majestically above them. Man only finds himself in a state of spiritual satisfaction when these emotional storms of our physical nature can no longer shake the summit of the soul. <115>

Both Buddha and Eckhart asserted, however, that the mystical experience is ineffable, says Stace. < 1 16>

Bimal Krishna Matilal has criticized Stace and claims that it is doubtful whether Buddha regarded the mystical experience as ineffable. Besides, nirvana is not a mystical experience but an *insight* into the nature of reality. The mystical *experience is* not regarded as ineffable in Mahayana Buddhism either. Ineffability applies only to the mystical ontological object. <117>

(b) Stace's other argument against the theory of emotion is that the entire mystical tradition has been against it. Instead, the tradition supports the idea that it is the nature of the mystical experience, and not only the feelings that accompany the experience, that makes the experience ineffable. To support his argument Stace refers to all the research that he has done, the conclusions of which he has presented in, for example, *Mysticism and Philosophy. < 118>*

(c) Matilal has criticized the theory of emotion and argues that if the mystic claims that the mystical experience is very valuable but ineffable, he is being inconsistent. How can the mystic know whether the experience is valuable if it is ineffable? It as if a jeweller, to use Matilal's own example, should value a specific jewel without being able to explain why he valued the jewel in that way. <119>

Matilal's argument is untenable. The theory of emotion takes as its starting point the fact that mystical experiences are characterized by feelings. To claim that an experience is valuable, however, is not a question of describing a feeling but of expressing an opinion as to its worth. Consequently, Matilal's argument is not applicable to the theory of emotion. Perhaps Matilal means that mystical experiences are not only characterized by feelings, but also by being valuable. But he has not stated it in this way.

However, even if the mystic should regard the experience as valuable, which is likely, it does not necessarily follow that he should be able to describe it. We can be sure of what an experience is like without being able to describe it. Our language perhaps does not supply the concepts needed for describing the experience. We can also regard the experience as valuable without being able to point out what makes it so.

Moreover, this talk of value is not a description of the experience, at least not according to my contextual interpretation of Matilal. The realization that the experience is valuable is something that comes to the mystic after the experience is past. Thus, the experience can still be ineffable.

3.6. 1. Jerome D Frank's Neurophysiological Explanation

This, as yet very briefly formulated, theory claims that the mystical experience is said to be ineffable because during its course the mystic primarily uses the right half of the brain, which is not often used for linguistic activities. < 120> 1 assume that Frank is here referring to the investigations that have been performed by brain researchers such as Roger Sperry, Joseph Bogen and Michael Gazzaniga. In these the conclusion has been reached that the left half of the brain has specialized in analytical, logical thinking, conception of time, etc. while the right half has specialized in a holistic way of functioning, in spatial relations, pictures, recognition of faces, etc. What is interesting is that the ability to speak and linguistic activities in general are concentrated in the left half of the brain. <12l> If the mystic primarily uses the right half of the brain during the mystical experience, he may find it difficult to describe his experiences. <122>

3.6.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

Frank does not claim that it would be logically impossible to use the right half of the brain to describe mystical experiences. But mystics have not yet succeeded in doing this, according to my contextual interpretation of Frank. The experience is therefore ineffable. Even if it were possible, then, if we accept Frank's theory, to identify properties of mystical experiences by a scientific method it is impossible in the present state of research.

3.6.3. Criticism of Frank's Theory

Support may be found for the theory if it can be shown that mystics do in fact primarily make use of the right half of the brain. The only investigation I know of in which persons who could conceivably have mystical experiences were studied with the help of an EEG was done by Mark Westcott at the University of Durham, England. However, his study of TM-meditators showed that meditation brought about a balance between the two halves of the brain rather than that the right half dominated in activity. <123> Moreover, there are lefthanded persons whose linguistic ability is concentrated in the right half of the brain. Neither can it be claimed that it is impossible for the right half of the brain to train its ability to deal with language. <124> This has in fact been shown, for instance, in studies of persons in whom the left half of the brain has been seriously damaged. < 125 > It would be strange, then, if the mystic who has had mystical experiences for some twenty, thirty years should not have trained his ability to deal with language via the right half of the brain. Consequently, I do not think that Frank's theory is generally applicable. It may possibly relate to the early stages of the mystical way. It is up to future neurophysiological research to show this.

3.7.1. Richard Gale's Pedagogical Explanation

Gale's suggestion for a solution implies that the mystical experience is so valuable that he is afraid that words may become a substitute for the experience itself. Gale draws a parallel with the fear of a composer that a concert programme may become a substitute for the experience of the music itself. Both the mystic and the composer wish, therefore, to point out that the direct experience is the most important one. So they choose not to conceptualize the experience and say it is ineffable. <126>

3.7.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

According to this theory it is not logically impossible for the mystic to describe his experience to others. But the mystic chooses not to describe it, which is why it is impossible to identify properties of mystical experiences by a scientific method if we accept Gale' theory.

3.7.3. Criticism of Gale's Theory

No one doubts that the mystical experience is valuable to the mystic. But it is doubtful whether there is any connection between the value of the experience and utterances about ineffability. Why does the mystic attempt to describe the mystical experience, as Gale says he does, if mystical words may become a substitute for the experience itself? Is it not more likely that the mystic would in that case refrain from describing the experience and say instead: Try it yourself! Then the mystical sentences would function evocatively or instructively, not descriptively. Gale asserts, however, that mystical sentences function descriptively:

... mystics as a matter of fact do manage to conceptualize their mystical experiences when they are outside them. By applying concepts such as "the undifferentiated unity", "the dissolution of the personal ego", "non-temporal and non-spatial", "the sense of peace and sacredness", etc. to their experiences they succeed in distinguishing mystical from nonmystical experiences. (Gale's italics) <127>

Three pages further on Gale writes:

> Both men are telling us by their *refusal to conceptualize* their experience that it is the direct experience itself which counts ... (my italics) <128>

It is a puzzle to me how Gale can claim that mystical sentences function descriptively and at the same time assert that the composer and the mystic refuse to describe their experiences.

3.8.1. The Psychoanalytical Explanation Put Forward by Raymond Prince and Charles Savage

A psychoanalytical explanation, as yet only in its preliminary stages, has been put forward by Raymond Prince and Charles Savage. They claim that the mystical experience has the following characteristics: (a) that the mystic withdraws from the "world" in order to attain mystical experiences, (b) that the experience is ineffable, (c) that the experience is regarded as supplying knowledge, (d) that the mystic experiences ecstasy and (e) that the ego is experienced as dissolving and the mystic has the feeling that he is fusing with all. < 129>

Prince and Savage claim that the mystical experience is regressive. During the mystical experience the mystic returns to an earlier mode of functioning, in this case to the level of a two-year-old or younger. < 130> Using the concept of regression as their starting-point, Prince and Savage explain the mystical experience in the following manner. To withdraw from the world is a norm way of giving rise to regressive experiences. Prince and Savage point here is how, among other things, schizophrenia is developed and to investigations sensory deprivation. <l31> As far as the ineffability of the experience concerned, the experience is preverbal, and it is therefore impossible to conceptualize it. Prince and Savage cite Jakob Boehme: <132>

> ... Who can express it? Or why and what do I write, whose tongue does but stammer like a child which learning to speak? With what shall I compare it? Or to what shall I liken it? Shall I compare it with the love of this world? No, that is but a mere dark valley to it. <l33>

The above quotation cannot be used in support of their theory, as it cannot be found in the source that Prince and Savage refer to. In addition, the work in question is a compilation of utterances from several works by Boehme, without any specification being given of which works and where in these works this passages may be found. The source cannot therefore be verified.

Prince and Savage explain the mystic's feeling of gaining knowledge during the mystical experience by referring to early experiences of breast-feeding which is characterized by immediacy and reality. < 134> They explain the bliss of the experience by referring to the bliss felt during breast-feeding. Here Prince and

Savage cite Jakob Boehme, Richard St Victor and Francis de Sales. <135> Finally, the experience of the dissolution of the ego and fusion with all is explained by pointing to the fact that the young child does not feel any distinction between itself and the world around it. <136> Prince and Savage also mention that neurophysiological investigations have shown that when yogis find themselves in *samadhi* they cannot be disturbed by external sensory stimulation, a phenomenon that is also typical of infants in certain specific situations. < 137>

3.8.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

As the mystical experience is characterized as being preverbal, it is impossible to describe the properties of mystical experiences. Thus, it is impossible to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method if we adopt Prince and .Savage's theory.

3.8.3. Criticism of Prince and Savage's Theory

(a) Nils Bj6rn Kvastad has criticized Prince and Savage's theory. He does not mean that all mystical experiences are preceded by dissociating oneself from the "world". This does not apply, for example, to modern mystics. Perhaps Kvastad is referring here to what are known as the spontaneous mystics, that is mystics who, without practising any method or without any interest in mystical experiences, suddenly have one. One such mystic is Richard Maurice Bucke, whom we shall meet in the next chapter.

Kvastad also believes that we can question whether dissociating oneself from the "world" always precedes regressive experiences. This does not, for example, apply to elderly people in their "second childhood", people who often play with children or people that drink and make merry, all of whom are types of people who often have regressive experiences. <138> Here, however, Kvastad himself has answered his own criticism. If mystical experiences are not always preceded by dissociation from the "world", they may still be regressive, as not all regressive experiences are preceded by dissociation from the "world".

As far as the ineffability of the experience is concerned, Kvastad claims that the experience would have been ineffable to the mystic if he had had mystical experiences permanently and had never returned to an ordinary mode of functioning. But the mystic does return and he can therefore describe the experience. There is no reason why he should not be able to describe the memory of the experience, even if he has experienced something belonging to a preverbal stage. <139> Kvastad assumes here that all experiences can be conceptualized. But if the culture in which the mystic lives does not supply the concepts with which to express these preverbal experiences, the experience will still be ineffable. The psychoanalytical explanation has in this case been combined with the theory of conceptual ineffability. But we can also consider combining it with the theory of logical ineffability. The experience will then be ineffable because it goes beyond the subject-object relationship, etc.

Kvastad also criticizes the idea that experiences of breast-feeding are felt as a revelation of truths. Nothing can be found to support such a theory. No one seems to remember these experiences, nor can we ask them who have them either. It may also be questioned whether experiences of breast-feeding provide the same type of intuitive insight as the knowledge of reality that mystics claim to have. < 140>

Prince and Savage's explanation of mystical ecstasy is problematic, Kvastad continues. True, certain mystics speak of their experiences as analogous with the experience of breast-feeding, for example, Francis de Sales, St Teresa and St John of the Cross, but how can the mystic know that the experiences are similar? They cannot, of course, remember their experiences of breast-feeding. It is therefore difficult to claim that the experiences are alike.

Kvastad concludes that Prince and Savage have not shown that the four characteristics can be linked up with regressive experiences, except where the experience of the dissolution of the ego and fusion with everything

is concerned. Moreover, Kvastad says that one implication of their view is that animals have mystical experiences, too, as their experiences of breast-feeding can hardly be distinguished from man's. <14l>

(b) Kvastad also presents a counter-argument to the theory. He bases this on what is known as the Isakower phenomenon. This phenomenon occurs in the hypnogogic state, that is when a person is just about to fall asleep. He can then experience something heavy and dark coming towards him and feel a large lump in his mouth. He also experiences the dissolution of his ego and fusion with all. Finally, he can feel somewhat dizzy and perhaps hear a buzzing noise. According to Kvastad, this experience cannot be classified as a mystical one. Isakower interpreted it as a hallucinatory revival of the experience of breastfeeding. If this interpretation is correct, Prince and Savage's theory would be undermined, as it would then be difficult to claim that mystical experience and experiences of breast-feeding are identical. <142>

But Kvastad's argument is not convincing. An investigation by Fenwick et a has shown that the experiences of TM- meditators may be classified as hypnogogic experiences. < 143 > Mystical experiences could then be regressive experiences.

Kvastad is also of the opinion that the difficulty in equating mystical and regressive experiences is also evident from an utterance of the psychologist and mystic, W Pinard, who writes as follows about an experience he had had during an illness:

> One night when I was at my worst and in despair, I bethought myself of practicing spontaneous imagery ... Within a few minutes 1 saw a beautiful orange-crimson glow which seemingly comprised the whole universe. Gradually but unmistakably this stupendous vision took on the form of a mother's breast ... The feeling of oneness, consolation and ultimate warmth was indescribable. I fell into a deep sleep almost at once and woke up the next day well on the way to recovery. I can accept this experience as a regression to early infancy, but, wonderful as it was, it in no way resembled the glory, the significance, the ecstasy and the dynamic power of classical (mystical) experience. (Kvastad's addition) < 144>

According to Kvastad, Pinard's utterance shows that it can be difficult equate regressive experiences of breast-feeding with mystical experiences <145>

(b) The theory presupposes that the mystical experience is characterized by the dissolution of the ego, fusion with all and ecstasy. But how do Prince and Savage know that this is the case if the mystical experience is ineffable, that is if the experience is preverbal and thus cannot be conceptualized? Either the experience has these characteristics, from which follows that the experience is effable, or the experience is ineffable because it is preverbal, from which follows that it cannot have the characteristics in question. Prince and Savage cannot claim both without being inconsistent.

Moreover, if the mystical experience is ineffable in the way Prince and Savage mean, they cannot base their theory on the fact that the two characteristics mentioned can be connected with regression.

3.9. 1. Logical Ineffability: A Theory Presented by Richard Hubert Jones and Walter T Stace in his Intermediate Period <146>

In principle, Jones and Stace put forward the same arguments. There are certain differences between them, however, and I have therefore chosen to present both theories.

(i)   Non-mystical, ordinary reality is experienced and interpreted with the help of the sense organs and intellect.

(ii)   Language is dualistic in character.

In his intermediate period Stace claims, as we have seen earlier, that reality can be divided into what he calls the "natural" and the "divine order". When man functions in the natural order, he uses his sense organs and intellect. A prerequisite for being able to use the analytical ability of the intellect is that the subject-object relationship is maintained, that is that there is a subject that is trying to understand an object. <147>

The formation of concepts in the ordinary, non-mystical state of consciousness occurs, logically speaking, in three stages. In the first stage the consciousness distinguishes one entity from another. In the second the relationship between these entities is investigated. In the third stage the definition of concepts takes place, that is the entities are classified. <148>

According to Richard Hubert Jones, a referential theory is characterized by the idea that language splits up our conception of reality into segments by forming concepts that are based on contrast and comparison between entities. The sentence "This is X" necessarily implies that we cannot at the same time claim "This is not X". In a specific culture language distinguishes experiences on the basis of what is regarded as most important, most convenient, or necessary for survival. Different languages therefore have different systems of concepts, says Jones. <149>

(iii)   The mystical experience is non-dualistic in character.

Stace claims that during the mystical experience the mystic becomes aware that the relationship between subject and object is transcended. The mystics experience a relationless, undifferentiated unity. During the experience neither the sense organs nor the intellect are used, but what Stace calls, as we have seen earlier, "intuition". <150>

Jones also says that, according to the mystics, the mystical experience is characterized by being what they call "undifferentiated", interpreted by Jones to mean that it is not an object or does not contain an object. The duality between subject and object has been transcended. Jones cites the Upanishads: <15l>

> ... where knowledge is of a dual nature (implying a subject which knows and an object which is known), there, indeed, one hears, sees, smells, tastes and also touches, the self knows everything. Where knowledge, being devoid of effect, cause or action, unspeakable, incomparable, indescribable, what is that? It is impossible to say. <152>

The differences between Stace and Jones as far as (i)-(iii) are concerned are that Stace has adopted a specific view of reality while Jones has not reached a decision on the ontological question. Jones only states that we split up our *experience* of reality into segments. Nor does Jones express any opinion on how the mystic acquires knowledge during the mystical experience, while Stace here speaks of "intuition". None of these differences, however, alters the logical structure of the argument.

(iv) Mystical words cannot refer to properties of the mystical experience.

This follows from (ii) and (iii). According to Stace, the intellect cannot comprehend an experience that is beyond the subject-object relationship:

Thus it is of the very nature of intellect to involve the subject-object opposition. But in the mystic experience this opposition is transcended. Therefore the intellect is incapable of understanding it. Therefore it is incomprehensible, ineffable. <1.53>

The reason why the intellect cannot be used for understanding the mystical experience is that a concept refers to a property of an entity. But the mystical experience does not have any properties: <154>

But why can no words be found? The reason is that words, except for proper names, stand for concepts; and concepts connote predicates or collections of predicates. Thus to say that God is ineffable is to say that no concepts apply to Him and that He is without qualities. <155>

The consciousness can therefore not distinguish between entities, investigate their relationships or classify them during the mystical experience. <156>

Stace claims that the mystical experience is unique. It would still be ineffable even if we had another sense organ or we should have a mystical experience ourselves. It is the mystics themselves who, in spite of having had mystical experiences, maintain that the experiences are ineffable. Thus the experiences are a mystery even to the mystics. <157>

Jones views on the question of meaning are radically different to Stace's, but the differences between them do not affect the argument concerning the phenomenon of ineffability. Even if Jones is not positive towards a referential theory, he admits that most people, including the mystics, assume that meaning should be analysed in terms of reference. If the mystics had not, implicitly or explicitly, accepted a referential theory, they would not have needed to speak of the ineffability of the mystical experience, says Jones. The mistake that is made is to draw conclusions about the nature of reality from the grammatical form of the terms. In other words, we assume that concepts correctly mirror the nature of reality. We draw conclusions about ontology from grammar. The segments that the concepts point to become real, independent entities. An example is the word "I", which to many stands for a mental entity. Jones also mentions Galileo's discussion of the names of colours and Russell's treatment of the concept of substance. According to Arthur Danto, whom Jones refers to, all metaphysical subjects assume that there is a correlation between reality and language. Danto claims that most people appear to accept the referential theory. <158>

It is Jones view that the mystical experience is ineffable because the mystical experience does not contain any object and because mystics have accepted the referential theory, which is based on the fact that words stand for objects.

Jones cites mystical utterances in support of his argument. Nagarjuna, the Buddhist philosopher, analysed various linguistic concepts to show that it is impossible to correlate the content of a concept with something real. Those who, for example, accept the concept of self-existence (svabhava) assume that words in a language reflect the nature of reality. Nagarjuna tries to show that neither an entity (bhava) nor an experience of something (dharma) is real (sat), because both lack self-existence. The way from suffering to enlightenment goes via the insight that concepts and reality are not connected. One property of reality is, according to Nagarjuna, the absence of all conceptual projections (prapanca). Nirvana is attained when one has removed the tendency to project concepts to reality, that is when one no longer experiences reality in a specific way that depends on language containing specific grammatical distinctions. The mystical experience is characterized by the fact that the mystic can use natural language without giving rise to the illusion that words stand for real, separate, independent entities. <159>

This, shows, says Jones, that Nagarjuna is critical of the referential theory. But, according to Jones, Nagarjuna's criticism is based on the same type of theory of meaning. Words and sentences still refer to something, even if this *something* is not real but relatively stable forms in our experiences, forms that we group and pay attention to. Jones thinks that such a point of view is basically also a way of expressing a referential theory. <160>

Jones claims that we can find the same logical relationship between the view of meaning, on the one hand, and utterances about ineffability, on the other, in Plotinus, Lao Tzu and Sankara. <16l>

(v) The mystical experience is logically ineffable.

This follows from (iv). <162>

3.9.2. Implications for the Problem of Identification

According to this theory, such is the character of the mystical experience that it is logically impossible to identify it, and consequently also using a scientific method.

3.9.3. Criticism of the Theory of Jones/Stace in his Intermediate Period

(a) As we have seen (2.1.1.), an investigation of how mystics actually use mystical words/sentences shows, according to later Stace, that mystical sentences primarily have a descriptive function. As mystical sentences primarily functions descriptively, then the mystical experience cannot be logically ineffable. The reason why Stace reached this conclusion in his later period was, as I have already mentioned (see 2.4) the specific method he used for studying mystical texts, which deviated from the one he used in his intermediate period. The method Stace used in his intermediate period means that Stace accepts the proposition of the mystics about the inneffability and that he interprets the concept of ineffability in terms of *logical* ineffability and therefore draws the conclusion that mystical sentences cannot function descriptively. However, the rejection of the version of the symbolic theory from his intermediate period (see 2.2.3) means that Stace in later years also rejected the explanation of logical ineffability:

> the theory of metaphor … implies *absolute* inneffability. It implies that *all* the descriptive words used are metaphors. <163> (Stace´s italics)

I have already put forward the arguments for preferring Stace´s later method and need not repeat them here (see 2.4).

(b) Stace in his later period asserts that if the mystical experience is logically ineffable, we cannot claim this because nothing can be said about it, not even in a symbolic or metaphorical sense. We cannot even call the experience an "experience" or say that it is "ineffable". <164>

The criticism is untenable. There are two starting-points for studying a phenomenon. The first implies that we describe the phenomenon by stating its empirical properties. But we can also describe the phenomenon without conceptualizing its properties in the empirical world in an adequate manner. Here we can make use of an explicitly formulated conceptual apparatus with whose help we can study the phenomenon. Sometimes it may be necessary to use the other way to be able to study a specific phenomenon at all. According to my contextual interpretation of Stace, he uses the latter method. Stace uses the concept of *experience* to be able to speak of the phenomenon at all. The concept is, however, not completely adequate, but he may not have anything better. Stace in his intermediate period writes:

> ... relies on a use of the word "experience" which is inapplicable to the case in hand. By an experience we ordinarily mean something which is before the mind or present to it. This involves a distinction between the mind and its experience or object. Thus the colour or smell is "there", and 1, who cognize it, am different from it. Moreover one colour is like another, and is unlike a smell. In all such experiences, therefore, the concept comes into play. But the mystic experience is not of this kind. <165>

By using this method, Stace is able to speak of "the experience" as logically ineffable and beyond the subject-object relationship. These propositions are then being used on a meta-level.

The theory assumes, however, that the mystics also use the expressions concerned in the same way as Stace. If a mystic uses, for example, the expression "beyond the subject-object relationship" on an object level, the experience cannot at the same time be claimed as being logically ineffable.

(c) Richard M Gale claims that many mystics have, in fact, described properties of mystical experiences, for instance, in their autobiographies. Not only mystics, but also non-mystics, appear to understand these mystical words/ sentences. Gale goes on to say that if we were suddenly to have an experience characterized by dissolution of the ego, infinity, undifferentiated unity, serenity and holiness, we should probably exclaim: "Why that Eckhart wasn't Just pulling our leg! There really are such experiences and I just had one!" < 166>

Like Stace in his later period, Gale of course assumes that mystical sentences function descriptively and this "fact" then governs his criticism of Stace. However, Gale has not shown that mystical sentences do function descriptively.

(d) According to Gale, the mystics claim that mystical experiences can be verified if you practise the correct methods, for example, meditation or prayer. But how does one know if one has had a mystical experience if the experience is so unique that it is impossible to describe? asks Gale. <167> Neither Stace nor Jones has discussed this question, but a possible answer is as follows. If mystical words, as Stace and Jones believe, consist in symbols, we may be able to decide if we have had a mystical experience if mystical sentences give rise to some form of non-ordinary experience, that is if the sentences function evocatively. If this does not happen, then we are not sufficiently sensitive. We can, however, never be entirely certain that we have had a mystical experience, something that Stace and Jones have not asserted either.

(e) Gale argues that it does not follow from the fact that an experience is unique that it cannot be described. An experience of yellow, for example, is just as unique as a mystical experience. We cannot define yellow in more fundamental terms. But we can nevertheless form the concept of yellowness and communicate the experience of yellow to others if they have had similar experiences. <168>

Gale's criticism is not tenable. Many mystics speak about the ineffability of the mystical experience but generally not about the ineffability of non-mystical experiences. This suggests that there is something that is specific to the mystical experience, something that does not include other types of experience. In addition, understanding of mystical words/sentences is not made easier by a person having his own mystical experiences. The problem is, as we have seen earlier, that it is the mystic who finds it difficult to describe his experience, not only to the non-mystic but to himself and to other mystics.

(f) Gale questions whether the mystical experience is really characterized by transcendency of the subject-object relationship. How can the mystic remember that he has had a mystical experience in that case? How can he say that it was his experience? How can he experience that the ego has dissolved? < 169 >

But even if one can explain how this may occur, Gale continues, it does not follow that the subject-object relationship cannot be maintained or that the mystical experience is unique. If, for example, the conductor Schnabel is conducting Beethoven's 14th sonata, he cannot at the same time either formulate, consider or "verify" the sentence "Schnabel is concentrating solely on interpreting Beethoven's 14th sonata". The fact that the mystic can neither formulate, consider nor "verify" the sentence "I felt an undifferentiated unity" (my example) during the course of his experience is, according to Gale, no argument in support of the uniqueness of the experience. The differences between the two examples are only practical. Gale claims that the mystical experience is not logically ineffable. <170>

Stace could have answered that while Schnabel does not have any difficulty in repeating the sentence in question after the concert. the mystics cannot say anything about the mystical experience at all because the intellect cannot comprehend experiences based on intuition.

(g) Gale claims that Stace is contradicting himself when he first says that the mystical experience is logically ineffable and then that the mystics describe their experiences in almost exactly the same way. <17l>

(h) Walter Arnold Kaufmann claims that language cannot only be used for describing experiences based on a subject experiencing an object. There are types of experience in which the subject-object relationship is suspended, but which are describable. Kaufmann mentions emotional experiences here.

Another argument against the theory is that subject-object experiences also contain an element of immediacy, which is not possible to describe. <172>

Kaufmann's arguments are untenable. In emotional experiences I know that it is I who feels the emotions, that is, that there is a subject. But there is an object, too - the content of the feelings. I have not been able to find any example of an emotional experience in which the relationship between subject and object has been transcended. Unfortunately, Kaufman has not cited any example of his own. According to Stace and Jones there is no relationship between subject and object in the mystical experience. <173>

The other objection is irrelevant. It does not follow from the fact that there are elements in the subject-object experience that are not describable that the mystical experience cannot be logically ineffable on the grounds that the experience is characterized by the transcendency of the subject-object relationship.

(i) Finally, I am critical towards Stace's use of ontological assumptions when he explains why intuitive insight cannot be conceptualized. To be able to know the nature of reality, we need criteria to help us to decide whether something is real or not. Stace has not formulated any such criteria. As Peter Koestenbaum has so correctly pointed out, Stace has postulated that existence should be seen from only two different viewpoints. Why not one, or three? < 174> Moreover, Stace puts the cart before the horse. How can we decide whether the mystic experiences something real before we have been able to identify the mystical experience? Furthermore, the mystical experience is, according to Stace, logically ineffable, for which reason its identification is logically impossible.

To sum up: I have refuted parts of Stace's criticism of the theory. The introduction of the distinction between object- and metalanguage may prevent the theory from being inconsistent. The question is, however, whether the mystics use the expressions "experience", "ineffability" and 'beyond the subject-object relationship" in the way suggested by the theory. I have also dismissed parts of Gale's criticism. Gale assumes, but has not shown, that mystical sentences function descriptively. Nor has he shown that it is not possible for the mystical experience to be unique. Kaufman's arguments are not tenable either. Emotional experiences are not examples of experiences in which the subject-object relationship is transcended. It does not follow from the fact the subject-object experiences contain elements that are indescribable that mystical experiences cannot be logically ineffable. Finally, I have mentioned the problem of drawing conclusions about the nature of mystical experiences with ontological assumptions as a starting-point.

3. 10 Short Summary and Final Discussion

To be able to claim that it is possible to identify a mystical experience by scientific method Stace has to explain the mystics talk of the ineffability of the experience. If the mystical experience is, for instance, absolutely ineffable, it is logically and consequently scientifically impossible to identify it. In the previous chapter we also saw that ideas about the semantic functions of mystic, sentences were logically connected with the view on ineffability. If the mystical experience is absolutely ineffable, the mystical sentences cannot function descriptively, which implies that it is impossible to identify mystical experiences either logically or by a scientific method.

In this chapter I have given an account of and critically examined nine theories that claim to explain what the mystics mean when they say that the mystical experience is ineffable. Only two of them, that of Stace in his late period and that of Smart, senses (i) - (iii), enable scientific identification of the mystical experience with regard to the problem of ineffability. Other theories, except the one on logical ineffability, do indeed

admit that it is logically possible to identify mystical experiences, but it is impossible to identify properties of the mystical experience using a scientific method.

Stace in his later period claims that the mystical experience is ineffable during the course of the experience because it is characterized by undifferentiated unity. After the experience is over, the mystic can, however, contrast the properties of the mystical experience with those of perceptual experiences and can then correctly describe the mystical experience. The fact that the mystic speaks of ineffability is explained by the experience being paradoxical in character. The mystic thus concludes, falsely, that the experience is ineffable because it is paradoxical. According to Stace, it is evident from the utterances of the mystics that the experience is paradoxical. He also finds support for his theory in the fact that the mystic appears to be confused when he tries to describe the mystical experience.

Stace's theory is beset with many problems. Studies of mystical texts conducted by Almond, Berdie, Kvastad and Smart have shown that (a) many mystical texts do not contain paradoxes, (b) any paradoxes that exist could be pseudoparadoxes, (c) there are mystics who do not express themselves in paradoxes but who still assert that the mystical experience is ineffable. Carloye, Kennick and Wainwright also argue that if mystical sentences are contradictory, they are of necessity false. Descriptions of mystical experiences that are not regarded as following the laws of logic are not contradictory either but alogical, as Kennick has pointed out. Moreover, there are suggestions as to how the paradoxes may be solved. Within the Madhyamika school paradoxes are used, according to Matilal, for teaching purposes and not in descriptions of experiences. The fact that mystics attempt to find linguistic expressions for their mystical experiences also indicates, according to Matilal, that the experience is not characterized by paradoxicality. Corbenic has shown that two of the utterances that Stace cites in support of the idea that mystical paradoxes are descriptions of mystical experiences should not be interpreted in the way Stace suggests. Berdie's investigations have also shown that the mystics are not usually confused when describing their mystical experiences. Robertson has commented that many mystics have been good philosophers, for which reason it is unlikely that they should have any difficulty with language without knowing it. Many of them also explain what they mean by the concept of ineffability. Robertson also finds it hard to understand that the mystic, by recalling his experience later, can introduce multiplicity and distinctions into an experience that Stace claims is characterized by undifferentiated unity. The distinction between what takes place during and after the experience is therefore not a fruitful one, something that Matilal also took up.

Ninian Smart asserts that the word "ineffability" may be used in four different ways. First of all it can be used as a word of reinforcement to emphasize the intensity of bliss. Secondly, the mystic can use it to express that there is no content to describe. Thirdly, it is used to imply that words can never describe an experience completely. Finally, it can stand for the requirement that the receiver should have a specific disposition to be able to understand mystical language.

It is possible that the word "ineffability" may be used as a word of reinforcement in mystical texts. Unfortunately, Smart has not mentioned any support for this by referring to mystical utterances. The same criticism may be directed towards the demand that the receiver should have a certain disposition to be able to understand mystical language. Neither has Smart shown that the mystical experience is without content. The claim that mystical experiences are ineffable because all experiences are to a certain extent ineffable is possible but not likely, as the mystics themselves believe that there is something specific to mystical experiences that makes them ineffable. Finally, Smart's theory is incomplete, as it cannot explain all the mystical utterances about ineffability. Smart's theory has, however, one merit, namely that it points out something that is of fundamental importance - that the word "ineffable" can have different meanings in different linguistic contexts.

Paul Henle claims that the mystical experience is ineffable because the concepts available to the mystic cannot be used to describe a mystical experience. If this theory is true, mystical language ought to contain tautologies and paradoxes, which it in fact does, says Henle.

This theory is also problematic. Neither Henle nor anyone else has succeeded in indicating any support for the theory by referring to specific mystical texts. The theory has not succeeded in supplying a satisfactory explanation of the fact that mystics have not tried to form new concepts but describe experiences with the help of the system of concepts that is already available. Nor has the theory explained the occurrence of what

appear to be positive words in mystical language. Finally, it is doubtful whether mystical language contains any genuine paradoxes.

The theory of non-experiential ineffability states that the mystical experience is ineffable if one has not had a mystical experience of one's own. Objections may also be raised against this theory. The mystics do not use claim that other experiences than the mystical ones are ineffable. It is more likely that the problem consists in the fact that there is something specific to the mystical experience that makes people regard it as ineffable. Moreover the theory does not explain why the mystical experience is often ineffable by the mystic himself.

The theory of emotion states that mystical experience is characterized very subtle feelings and that subtle feelings are very difficult to describe. Therefore, the experience is said to be ineffable. Most mystics and researchers of mystical experience do, however, agree that the mystical experience is not or an experience of feeling.

Jerome D Frank suggests that the mystical experience is said to be ineffable because during its course the mystic primarily uses the right half of the brain which is not often used for linguistic activities. The only EEG investigation that has been done in this area (1987), however, show that the mystic does not primarily use the right half of the brain during the mystical experience. The ability to perform linguistic activities can also be trained in the right half of the brain, and this ought to have taken place if the mystic has had mystical experiences for a long period. But the experience is still regarded as ineffable to these mystics.

Richard Gale's suggestion for a solution implies that the mystic chooses no to conceptualize the properties of the mystical experience because he is afraid that the words may become a substitute for the experience itself.

Gale is inconsistent as he claims that mystical sentences function descriptively while at the same time asserting that the mystics do not describe their experiences because they are so valuable.

Prince and Savage maintain that the mystical experience is ineffable because it is preverbal and regressive. They claim support for its being regressive in (a) the fact that the mystic withdraws from the "world" in order to have mystical experiences, (b) neurophysiological investigations of yogis in *samadhi* show that they cannot be disturbed by external sensory stimulation, something that also applies to infants in certain situations.

Kvastad has criticized the theory and argues that mystical experiences that belong to the preverbal stage can be described, as the mystic does not remain at this stage permanently. Nor can this theory provide the sole explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability. Prince and Savage's explanation of the cognition and bliss ascribed to the experience in terms of regression is unconvincing. An utterance from a mystic/psychologist also indicates that mystical and regressive experiences are not identical. The theory is also inconsistent in that it proceeds from certain characteristics of the mystical experiences, such as ecstasy, dissolution of the ego and fusion with all, while at the same time claiming that the experience is ineffable. If the experience is ineffable, then Prince and Savage's interpretation of its characteristics in terms of regression cannot be used in support of the theory.

   The last theory, that of logical ineffability, is characterized by laying emphasis on the specific nature of the mystical experience. As the mystical experience is characterized by non-duality while language is dualistic by nature, words cannot describe the mystical experience. The mystical experience cannot be comprehended by the intellect as the subject-object relationship has been transcended. Thus words cannot stand for properties of an experience, nor can they be used to describe a mystical experience.

   But there are difficulties in accepting this theory. It is questionable whether the mystics use the expressions "experience", "ineffable" and "beyond the subject-object relationship" in the way the theory suggests. Furthermore, when defining the concept of mystical experience, Stace takes as his point of departure the idea that reality has some specific characteristics, a procedure that is difficult to defend.

In the final discussion in Chapter 2, it was made clear that to accept the idea that it is logically possible that mystical sentences to function descriptively one has to assume that the explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability put forward by Stace in his later period is preferable to theories that, for instance, state that the mystical experience is logically ineffable. One of the tasks in this chapter is therefore to determine which theory is preferable, so as to be able to decide whether Stace has shown that it is possible to identify mystical experience by a scientific method. An evaluation of Stace's and others explanations of the phenomenon of ineffability means that I, too, can decide whether Stace has shown that it is possible to use a scientific method to identify mystical experiences with regard to the phenomenon of ineffability.

Which theory should we prefer? That question is, unfortunately, not easy to answer. It is quite clear that the theory put forward by Stace in his later period is not probable and cannot constitute a general explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability. Nor can the theory of emotion or the theory of non-experiential ineffability claim to be complete. As far as the other theories are concerned, there is no reliable support in the form of utterances from mystics, etc. It is therefore difficult to choose among these theories. All of them are problematic. I have not been able to find any decisive argument either for one of them or against all of them except one. My suggestion as to a solution is therefore as follows. The theory of Stace in his later period can certainly not claim to be complete, but it is both logically and actually possible to find mystics who use the expression "ineffable" in the way Stace states. The same may be said of several other theories. It is unlikely that the mystical experience is without content, as Smart claims. But the four meanings of the expression "ineffability" that he recommends are both logically and actually possible. I do not think that any decisive argument has been produced against Henle's theory either. His theory is logically possible. There may be mystics who use the expression "ineffable" in Henle's sense. The theory of non-experiential ineffability cannot claim to be complete. But in the criticism of the theory only one counter-example was mentioned. As we have seen, there are mystics who use the expression "ineffable" in the way the theory recommends. The same arguments can be put forward regarding the theory of emotion, Gale's theory, Frank's, Prince and Savage's and Stace's/Jones's theories. Gale is inconsistent, to be sure, in claiming that mystical sentences function descriptively while asserting at the same time that the mystics do not conceptualize their experiences, but Gale's theory on the phenomenon of ineffability is not in itself inconsistent but represents a possible alternative. It is also possible that the mystic is incapable of determining the nature of the experience because it has primarily occurred through his using the right half of his brain or because the experience is preverbal.

It is obvious from the above argument that it is not always fruitful to confront the nine theories with each other. <175> They do not exclude each other logically. All may be adequate provided that they do not claim to be complete. It is possible that a specific mystic uses the word "ineffable" in different ways in different contexts and that different mystics use the same word in different ways. By the word "ineffable" one mystic may be expressing the idea that the mystical experience is conceptually ineffable, another that the receiver must have his own experiences to understand the word, a third expresses the intensity of bliss, etc. That this can be the case is shown by the fact that none of the philosophers presented in this chapter has used the same mystical utterance in support of his theory.

It is my opinion that to be able to decide which of the meanings (one or more) of the expression "ineffable" are used by each mystic it is necessary to analyse the utterances of the mystics in detail. Contrary to most researchers, I believe that by studying texts in this way we can in many cases decide how the mystics use the word "ineffable". The theory of Frank and, to a certain extent, that of Prince and Savage are exceptions, it is true. To be able to determine whether Frank's theory is applicable, we would have to perform EEG examinations of the mystic in question. Here it is not sufficient to analyse the mystic's utterances. If we wish to test Prince and Savage's theory, it would often be necessary to study the mystic more thoroughly than by just analysing his mystical utterances, but the latter may in some cases serve as a guide. < 176> If when analysing a specific linguistic context we see that one of the other theories can be applied to the utterance in question, we can conclude that Frank's and Prince and Savage's theories cannot be applied in this case.

At the end of Chapter 2 I discussed the logical relationship between the view of the semantic functions of mystical sentences, on the one hand, and the view of the phenomenon of ineffability, on the other. I then

preliminarily recommended Stace's later theory, which implies that the view of the phenomenon of ineffability should be logically governed by the result that has been reached after studying the semantic functions of mystical sentences. This method presupposes, however, that Stace's solution or, as we have seen, Smart's theory, senses (i) - (iii), are to be preferred to other alternatives. My analysis has led, however, to my being unable to recommend either Stace or Smart's solutions in preference to others. It is logically, and actually, possible that the mystical experience is ineffable in other senses that those that have been suggested by Stace/Smart. But if the expression "ineffable" is used according, for instance, to the theory of conceptual ineffability, this means that Stace is mistaken when he says that mystical sentences function descriptively. Stace's method does not take into account that such a situation can arise, and is therefore in my opinion unfruitful. Organ's method and that of Stace in his intermediate period can result, as we have seen, in our running the risk of not discovering that mystical sentences actually do function descriptively. But Stace's later method is not a better alternative. It can lead us to interpret mystical sentences as functioning descriptively even though they should not be interpreted in that way, as the mystic in question does not use the word "ineffable" in the way that Stace/Smart claim. I would therefore like to suggest a third method, which I believe can solve the problem that has arisen. The view of the phenomenon of ineffability should not be logically governed by the view of the semantic functions of mystical sentences, nor vice-versa either. Both problems should have the same logical status. I would still like to recommend that an analysis of mystical texts should begin by our trying to determine the actual semantic functions of the mystical sentences. The reason why our analysis should begin in this way is naturally that the mystic can in fact use language in a way that he himself is not aware of, something that would not come to light if we took the mystic's statement concerning his use of language as authoritative. But an analysis of the functions of the sentences is not sufficient to enable us finally to decide whether they function in a specific way. We must also take account of the fact that the mystic explicitly expresses, or implicitly assumes, a specific linguistic theory, for instance, that the mystic experience is ineffable, that mystical sentences have x function, or that mystical words refer to properties of the experience. A theory about the possible descriptive function of mystical sentences should therefore both be in accordance with how the mystical sentences actually function in a specific linguistic context and contain an explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability that is supported in the linguistic context or at least is not contradicted by that context. Only with this type of method can we, in my opinion, claim to have analysed the semantic functions of mystical sentences in an adequate way.

Even though Stace's theories regarding function and ineffability have been shown to be possible alternatives, Stace has not yet shown that the mystics do in fact primarily use the sentences descriptively or use the expression "ineffable" in the way he suggests. He has, however, tried to show this by analysing mystical utterances. With the help of the method recommended here, my next task is to determine whether Stace is right when he asserts that there are mystical sentences that function descriptively and that the word "ineffable" is used in the way he claims by analysing the mystical texts that he cites in support of his theory. On the basis of the result of this analysis, I shall then decide whether Stace has solved the problem of function and ineffability in a way that will enable us to use a scientific method to identify mystical experiences.

Notes

1. See Berdie 1979, p 36, Garside 1972, pp 96-98, Kellenberger 1979 and Stace 1960a, pp 281. 284, 295-306.
2. R T Blackwood has discussed whether there is any logical relationship between the ineffability of the mystical experience and so called 'negative theology'. The mystical word "ineffable" would in this case imply that every proposition about the mystical experience is false. As Blackwood dismisses such an interpretation of the phenomenon of ineffability I have chosen not to deal with Blackwood's ideas. (See Blackwood 1963, pp 203-205) Also I have chosen no to discuss the ideas of Lawrence J Hatab. Hatab's thoughts presuppose a theory of meaning in terms of use and not, as I do, a referential theory. See Hatab 1982.

3. B K Matilal, it is true, asserts that William James is a representative of such a theory. But as we shall see, James is a representative of the theory of non-experiential ineffability. See Matilal 1975, p 220.
4. Stace 1960a, p 297
5. Stace 1960a, pp 297-298
6. According to Walter Norman Pahnke, Evelyn Underhill and D T Suzuki implicitly adopt thesis (iii). But Underhill says nothing about the mystical experience being ineffable because the content is characterized by paradoxicality. See Underhill 1911, pp 331-332 which in Pahnke 1964, pp 71-73 is given as evidence.
7. This idea is in accordance with his reductionistic theory of cognition, a theory which I have given an account of earlier. The idea that the 'pure' experience is impossible to distinguish psychologically, which Stace asserts earlier in the same work does not appear to be of any concern to Stace a hundred pages later. See Stace 1960a, p 31.
8. Stace 1960a, pp 304-306
9. Stace 1960a, p 267. During the early period Stace already has the same opinion about the relationship between the truth of a sentence and the meaning of it. See Stace 1944, p 236,
10. Stace 1960a, p 253.
11. Ibid
12. Stace 1960a, p 65
13. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 63. Stace took this quotation from Otto 1932, p 61. Otto for his part collected the quotation from Keiffer 1924. However, Otto has not given any exact reference to a page. Therefore I cannot check it and examine its linguistic context.
14. Stace 1960a, pp 264-265
15. Stace 1960a, p 305
16. Stace 1960a, pp 305-306
17. Berdie 1979, p 61. As will be seen in chapter four, the Upanishads have several authors. To find utterances about ineffability in one upanishad and paradoxical utterances in another therefore does not provide any support for Stace's theory. However it is not clear whether this is what Berdie actually means.
18. Berdie 1979, pp 65, 68-69
19. Weiffer 1924, p 106. Quoted in Berdie 1979, p 68.
20. Kelley 1977, p 101. Referred to in Berdie 1979, p 68.
21. Kvastad 1980, pp 149-150. See also Almond 1982, pp 189-190, chapter 4, note 6. Almond refers to Schürmann 1978, pp 114-121. I will discuss paradoxes in Eckhart's works in 4.2.2.
22. Berdie 1979, pp 72-74
23. Berdie 1979, p 73
24. Smart 1963, p 187 and Smart 1962, p 22. See also Almond 1982, pp 76-78. Almond finds the origin of Stace's interpretation in his naturalistic presupposition. See Almond 1982, p 78. According to Berdie, Stace does not deal with paradoxes that occur in the extrovertive mystical experience. Berdie accuses Stace of not being complete (Berdie 1979, p 17). However, Berdie is wrong. Stace explicitly includes the extrovertive mystical experience too when dealing with mystical paradoxes. See Stace 1960a, pp 253,302. Berdie also argues that Stace has not sufficiently distinguished between paradoxes in introvertive and extrovertive mystical experiences. According to Berdie's interpretation of Stace, there seems to be no difference between paradoxes in the extrovertive and the introvertive mystical experiences, although the latter, unlike the former, includes the cognition of both time and space (Berdie 1979, p 23). However, Stace has explicitly made such a distinction. The so called 'pantheistic' paradox is one example of a paradox only to be found in the extrovertive mystical experience (Stace 1960a, p 253). When Berdie asserts that "Stace's failure to explore this issue in more detail is a serious shortcoming of his work", he is wrong (Berdie 1979, p 23).
25. According to Philip C Almond, who refers to Suzuki 1907, pp 243-276 (Almond 1982, p 189, note 6). However, in this chapter Suzuki does not assert that the paradox has been solved. On the contrary, he states that it has not been solved. See Suzuki 1907, p 266.
26. See Lossky 1957, pp 74, 86-87 and Almond 1982, p 76
27. Blakney 1941, p 62. Quoted in Berdie 1979, p 100

28. Berdie 1979, p 92
29. Cloud of Unknowing 1973, p 113. Quoted in Berdie 1979, p 170, note 15. Henson also thinks that the mystics themselves do not consider their mystical experiences to be paradoxical (Henson 1972, pp 98,101).
30. According to R T Blackwood there exist several mystical traditions which make use of a logic which does not include the law of the excluded middle. Blackwood mentions the Syadvada tradition within Jainism (Blackwood 1963, pp 207-208).
31. Corbenic 1978, pp 313-314
32. Suzuki 1957, p 56. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 269 and in Corbenic 1978, p 314.
33. Corbenic 1978, p 314
34. Corbenic 1978, p 296
35. Corbenic 1978, pp 381-382
36. Corbenic 1978, pp 286-287,292
37. Corbenic 1978, pp 363-365
38. Corbenic 1978, p 286
39. Stace 1960a, pp 260-262
40. According to B K Matilal, Stace's arguments are circular. Stace has defined 'logical rules' as rules which are applicable only to a world with at least two items. As the mystical experience is not characterized by multiplicity, logical rules are not applicable to the mystical experience. According to Matilal this is the same as stating that logic is logic and a mystical experience is a mystical experience because logic is logic and a mystical experience is a mystical experience. However, where the circularity should be in this I fail to understand. Does Matilal imply that the rules of logic are applicable to a world containing only one item? If this is the case, I cannot see how. See Matilal 1975, pp 239-240.
41. In Wainwright 1970, p 150 Wainwright expresses himself more carefully. He writes that the mystic 'at most' has access to a reality that lies behind our world. But Stace cannot accept Wainwright's position in this matter, irrespective of how he expresses it. Stace thinks that the mystic encounters a reality that completely transcends our world during the mystical experience. However, much criticism has been directed against Stace's view. Furthermore, we cannot settle the question concerning the epistemological status of mystical experiences before we have settled whether this experience can be identified, as Stace's epistemological ideas are based on his theory that most mystical experiences have similar properties.
42. Monism is the theory that claims that all that is real is the undifferentiated Unity. See Wainwright 1981, p 150 and -Stace 1960a, pp 237-240.
43. Wainwright 1981, pp 150-151
44. Wainwright 1981, pp 151-152
45. Wainwright 1981, pp 152-153
46. Stace 1960a, pp 273-274. Quoted in Wainwright 1981, p 188, note 22
47. Wainwright 1981, p 188, note 22
48. Stace 1960a, p 274
49. Wainwright 1981, p 154 and pp 187-188, note 20
50. Kennick 1962, p 389
51. Carloye 1980, p 5. H D Lewis has also criticazed Stace's views on what constitutes a meaningful sentence. Lewis claims that it is the connective 'and' which make a sentence meaningless as it contains propositions that contradict each other. See Lewis 1965, p 209.
52. See also Staal 1975, p 37.
53. Carloye 1980, p 5
54. Matilal 1975, p 240
55. Moore 1978, p 103
56. Moore 1978, pp 106-107
57. Charles W Morris agrees with Stace that the mystical experience is paradoxical in nature but for other reasons. However, as Morris has adopted a behavioural theory of meaning while my discussions are based on a referential theory, I have chosen not to deal with Morris theory See Morris 1957, and in this study, Chapter 1, note 1.
58. Streng 1978, p 159. See also Watkins 1920, pp 30-31.

59. Kvastad has adopted those four theories which try to explain mystical paradoxes and which are dismissed by Stace. However, Kvastad has not shown that the arguments against these theories put forward by Stace are untenable. See Kvastad 1980, pp 149-150.

60. Kvastad 1980, p 151

61. Kvastad 1980, p 154. See also Galloway 1970 p 152, Horne 1978, p 122 and Suzuki 1927, p 266.

62. Kvastad 1980, p 148

63. I have chosen not to give an account of the kind of argument that demands a closer analysis of utterances of specific mystics. See Almond 1982, pp 78-79, Corbenic 1978, pp 237-249, 295 302, Trethowan 1971, p 233 and Wainwright 1981, pp 1~8-149. For a discussion of mystic paradoxes which does not explicitly mention Stace's theory, see Guerry 1978, pp 11 -12, Jones 1979, pp 264-268 and Kvastad 1980, pp 138-140,151-152.

64. Matilal 1975, p 227

65. Mackenna 1969, p 399. Quoted in Berdie 1979, p 96.

66. Mackenna 1969, p 411. Quoted in Berdie 1979, p 96.

67. Blakney 1941, p 81. Quoted in Berdie 1979, p 96.

68. Peers 1962, p 42. Quoted in Berdie 1979, p 96.

69. Robertson 1962, p 181

70. Smart has not explicitly tried to define the concept of mystical experience but he has indicated several properties that often characterizes this experience. These are that the experience is characterized by ineffable bliss, by being beyond the world, by non- duality, by emptiness, by a meeting of something of a personal nature, by being beyond sensory perception, by being void of thought, by being beyond the relationship between subject and object, by being imageless, by being attained after a long period of meditation and, finally, by giving rise to a new world-view. As typical mystics Smart mentions Saint John of the Cross, Johannes Tauler, Meister Eckhart, al-Halliij, Sankara, Buddha, Bodhidarma, Jakob Boehme, Lao-Tsu and sufis/yogis. Smart excludes experiences of the prophets and bhakti experiences from the class of mystical experiences. Smart here mentions the following examples: Martin Luther, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Muhammed, Ramanuja, Nichiren, Jean Calvin and John Wesley (Smart 1965, p 75, Smart 1966, p 107, Smart 1967, p 133, Smart 1971, pp 55-56, Smart 1976, p 39. Smart 1981, p 109. Smart 1984, p 21).

71. Smart 1971, s 70. See also Smart 1956, pp 599-600, Smart 1968, p 137, Smart 1972b, pp 28-29 and Smart 1983, pp 120-121,124. See also Mehta 1978, p 68.

72. Smart 1971, pp 70-71

73. Chapter 1 of Teresa's El Castillo Interior. Smart doesn't say whether he has translated the Spanish text himself or not. Smart also refers to Samyutta Nik, iv, p 268. Here the ecstasy is spoken of as animitta, i e free from mental images (Smart 1971, p 70).

74. Smart 1971, p 71. See also Smart 1972b, p 29 and Smart 1983, pp 118-121,123.

75. Smart 1978, p 18. See also Bernhart 1977, pp 77-78 and Kaufmann 1958, p 227.

76. Smart 1978, p 19

77. See also chapter 1, note 1

78. Kessler&Prigge 1982, pp 44-48

79. Eckhart's sermon number 22. Kessler&Prigge refer to the translation in Stace 1960b, p 156, which is taken from Blakney 1941, pp 200-201 and quoted in Kessler & Prigge 1982, p 48.

80. Bharati 1976, p 48. Quoted in Kessler&Prigge 1982, p 48.

81. Kessler&Prigge 1982, p 51

82. Wainwright 1981, p 121. See also Horne 1978, pp 128-135.

83. Suzuki 1927, p 229

84. See Norrman 1982, pp 19-60 for criticism of the reductionistic theory of cognition.

85. Kessler&Prigge 1982, p 48

86. Smart 1971, pp 67-70

87. Brown 1903. p 20

88. Walter Kaufmann has questioned whether mystics usually claim that there is something specific about the ineffability of the mystical experience (Kaufmann 1958, p 229). However, in the utterances I have analysed in chapter four I have found support for my assertion (see 2.3 and 4.2.4).

89. As mentioned earlier also Galen Pletcher is of the same opinion as Henle. See Pletcher 1973, pp 205-206. Also Stanislav Grof and Charles T Tart seem to be open for this kind of reasoning. See Grof 1976, p 203 and Tart 1975 , p 224.

90. Henle 1949, pp 416-418

91. Henle 1949, p 418

92. Henle 1949, p 417

93. Henle 1949, pp 418-419

94. Henle 1949, p 419

95. Henle 1949, pp 419-420

96. Henle 1949, p 419

97. Arthur E Murphy argues that we cannot use the word 'proposition' about something what cannot be formulated in a language. Murphy has therefore suggested the expression 'candidate for a proposition', and Henle has accepted this modification. A candidate for a proposition is a potential proposition which, if there were concepts available, would state properties about X (Henle 1949, p 422).

98. Henle 1949, pp 420-421

99. Ennead V1,chapter 9, section 10. Pletcher has taken the quotation from Stace 1960b, p 1 Stace has for his part taken the quotation from the awkward translation in Inge 1918, vol 11 140. Quoted in Pletcher 1973, p 209.

100. Pletcher 1973, p 209

101. Huxley 1977, p 20. Quoted in Pletcher 1973, p 210.

102. Pletcher 1973, p 210

103. Hopkins 1980, p 111. Quoted in Berdie 1979, p 164, note 13. Berdie has not quoted Hopkins entirely correctly.

104. Henle 1949, pp 421-422

105. Jones 1979, p 265

106. Jones 1979, p 266

107. James 1979, p 367, Ducasse 1962, p 325, Brightman 1946, p 168. See also Gale 1970, p 31 Kellenberger

1979, pp 308-309, Stace 1952a, pp 35-36 and Stace 1960a, p 283.

108. See chapter 1, note 1

109. Stace 1960a, pp 283-284. See also Stace 1952a, pp 36-39.

110. Stace 1960a, p 284

111. Brown 1903, p 20. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 91, 284.

112. Peers 1957a, vol II, p 131

113. Stace 1960a, pp 281-282

114. Stace 1960a, p 282

115. Stace 1960a, p 54 and in part in Stace 1960a, p 282. Stace has taken this quotation from 0 1976, p 92 but has not transcribed it fully correctly. Otto for his part refers to translations Weiffer, Büttner and Lehmann. A more detailed reference is missing.

116. Stace 1960a, p 282

117. Matilal 1975, pp 221,223

118. Stace 1960a, pp 282-283

119. Matilal 1975, p 227

120. Frank 1975, p 39

121. See Gazzaniga 1974, pp 90-97 and Bogen 1974, pp 107-108

122. See e g Ornstein 1977, pp 20-21.

123. Westcott 1977

124. Gazzaniga 1974, p 95

125. Ornstein 1977, p 21

126. Gale 1970, p 305

127. Gale 1970, p 302

128. Gale 1970, p 305

129. Prince & Savage 1972, p 127

130. Prince & Savage 1972, pp 115,128
131. Prince & Savage 1972, pp 127-128.
132. Prince & Savage 1972, p 128. See also Deikman 1974, p 76 and Deikman 1981, p 257.
133. Scott 1954, pp 43-44. Quoted in Prince & Savage 1972, p 128.
134. Prince & Savage 1972, pp 128-129
135. Prince & Savage 1972, pp 129-131
136. Prince & Savage 1972, pp 123,131
137. Prince & Savage 1972, p 122
138. Kvastad 1980, 81
139. Kvastad 1980, pp 81-82
140. Kvastad 1980, p 82
141. Kvastad 1980, p 83-84
142. Kvastad 1980, pp 84-85
143. Fenwick 1977, pp 115-116
144. Pinard 1966, p 13. Quoted in Kvastad 1980, p 85.
145. Kvastad 1980, p 85
146. Russell Wood Galloway also has the same opinion on this matter. See Galloway 1970, pp 147148.
147. Stace 1952a, pp 40,75-77
148. Stace 1952c, p 27
149. Jones 1979, p 257
150. Stace 1952a, pp 21-23,40-41. See also Stace 1949-1950, pp 37-38.
151. Jones 1979, pp 257,259
152. Maitri upanishad, VI 7. Quoted in Jones 1979, p 257. Here Jones uses the translation by Radhakrishnan (Radhakrishnan 1953, p 821).
153. Stace 1952a, p 40
154. Stace 1952a, pp 39-40
155. Stace 1952a, p 33
156. Stace 1952c, p 27. See also Stace 1949-1950, p 25.
157. Stace 1952a, p 39. See also Stace 1949-1950, p 25.
158. Jones 1979, pp 257-258,260
159. Jones 1979, pp 258-259
160. Ibid
161. Jones 1979, pp 259-261
162. Stace 1952a, p 39
163. Stace 1960a, p 294
164. Stace 1960a, pp 290-291,294. See also Yandell 1975, pp 172-173.
165. Stace 1952a, pp 70-71
166. Gale 1970, pp 303-304
167. Gale 1970, p 304
168. Ibid
169. Gale. 1970, pp 303
170. Gale 1970, pp 302-303
171. Gale 1970, p 304. Stace's assertion concerning the common core of mystical experiences is to be found in Stace 1949-1950, p 24 and in Stace 1955, pp 10-11.
172. Kaufmann 1958, p 227. See also Jones 1909, p 76.
173. See also Appleby 1980, pp 149-154
174. Koestenbaum 1958, p 341
175. That there could be several reasons for claiming that the mystical experience is ineffable has also been pointed out by B K Matilal (Matilal 1975, p 221).
176. Kvastad has suggested that Prince & Savage's theory could be tested by means of hypnotism. The mystic could be hypnotized to reexperience their lives as infants and afterwards be encouraged to compare these experiences with the mystical ones (Kvastad 1980, p 84).

4. Analyses of Selected Mystical Texts and Conclusion

The Problem

As we have seen, both Stace and Organ claim that there exists a logical relationship between the semantic functions of some mystical sentence, on the one hand, and the ineffability of the mystical experiencem on the other. If the mystical experience is ineffable in the senses put forward by Jones/Stace in his intermediate period, it is neither logically nor actually possible that mystical sentences function descriptively in this specific linguistic context. Consequently, it is also impossible to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method on the basis of these utterances. If the expression "ineffable" should be interpreted according to Ninian Smart, sense (iv), Henle´s theory, the theory of non-experienatial ineffability, the theory of emotion or the theories of Gale, Frank or the colleagues Princw and Savage, it is logically possible for mystical sentences to function descriptively, true enough, but it is impossible to identify mystical experiences by a scientific method. If, on the other hand, the expression "ineffable" should be interpreted according to Stace in his later period or according to Smaert´s theory, senses (i), (ii) and (iii), then it becomes logically possible for mystical experiences to function descriptively and to identify mystical experiences with regard to the problem of function using a scientific method. Through the later meanings of the expression "ineffable", it has also been shown that the mystical experience is not ineffable in a sense that would prevent scientific identification.

In Chapter 3 I was unable to find any decisive argument against the loigical possibility of Stace´s theory from his later period or Smart´s theory, senses (i), (ii) and (iii), even though they may be strongly criticized. This does not mean, however, that the expression "ineffable" should be used in the way Stace/Smart suggest. Stace must therefore show that the mystic actually uses the expression "ineffable" in the way he recommends to enable identification in respect of the phenomenon of ineffability.

The same argument can be put forward concerning the semantic functions of mystical sentences. I have not found any support for mystical sentences not being logically able to function descriptively. But it still remains for Stace to show that mystical sentences actually do function descriptively so as to be able to claim that the identification of mystical experiences with regard to the problem of function is logically and scientifically possible.

Stace in his later period has cited utterances by 28 mystics from various traditions and times in support of his theory. My task is to analyse the mystical utterances Stace selected and also his interpretation of them, in order to discover whether it is possible to claim, on the basis of these utterances, that there are mystical sentences that function descriptively and that mystical experiences are not ineffable/or are ineffable in Smart's view, senses (i), (ii) and (iii). By answering these questions I shall be able to decide whether Stace has shown that it is possible to identify mystical experiences with regard to the problem of function and ineffability using a scientific method.

Method

It is my opinion that to be able to understand and interpret mystical words/ sentences, it is necessary to study both their linguistic and non-linguistic context. I shall give a short account of what this comprises below. Some of these rules are to be found in a manual on methods for interpreting texts but, as we shall see, Stace has broken several of these fundamental principles, which is the reason why I have chosen to formulate them explicitly.

A study of the non-linguistic mystical context comprises, amongst other things, the following:

(a) The historical period in which the mystic lived. Here I am thinking of economic, political and cultural conditions, institutions, rules, customs and usage; the rules for social behaviour that the mystic was influenced by etc.

(b) The religion/world view that the mystic advocated, especially the form it took during the period in which the mystic lived; doctrines, values, myths, rites, social organization and mystical writings. <l>

(c) The mystic's life, his social origins and family relationships, his intellectual and emotional development, his ideas, opinions and personality.

(d) The problems that the mystic had to cope with. A study of these often provides a guide when we try to interpret certain mystical terms.

(e) The original situation in which the text was communicated. A study of the intended receiver often provides valuable clues to the interpretation of mystical texts.

(f) The mystic's purpose in writing the work in question. This does not mean that I recommend an intentional interpretation of mystical texts. <2> But to know what the mystic's intentions were, as far as this may be ascertained, can provide us with valuable information about how the mystic actually uses his language.

A study of the mystical linguistic context includes, among other things, the following:

(g) The authenticity of the work, that is, first, if the mystic is the real author, secondly, if the manuscript in question is genuine or not.

(h) The problem of translations. Stace only works with texts translated into English. It is, however, very risky to use a translation as a basis when the task is to identify the mystical experiences of the author. A translator is usually bound by his own system of concepts, as a concept in one language is often not identical in content or scope to corresponding concepts in another language. In addition, translations are often faulty. Finally, each translation involves an *interpretation* of the text.

(i) Checking to see that sources are correctly given and that parts of the text that are relevant to the analysis have not been excluded. This may appear too elementary to mention, but, as we shall see, Stace has broken this rule on several occasions.

(j) The genre of the mystical texts. Carl A Keller and Peter Moore have paid attention to this aspect. Keller divides mystical literature into eight, what he calls literary "genres" and has also investigated whether it is possible to find descriptions of mystical experiences in them. The eight genres are briefly as follows: <3>

(A) Aphorisms in verse or prose form. Aphorisms tell us what the world or life is like and what life should be like and their purpose is didactic. As aphorisms repeat traditional ideas, are often poetic, speculative and normative, Keller maintains that is very difficult to decide, on the basis of such, whether the author has had mystical experiences of his own and, if so, what the characteristics of these were. <4>

(B) Biographies of mystics. Biographies often contain legendary material. They express the hopes, expectations and ambitions of the society in question and are often not historical documents. Thus, Keller says, it is often very difficult to decide whether the mystic referred to has really said what is attributed to him, for example, about the character of mystical experiences. <5>

(C) Reports of visions. Keller has divided these into three sub-groups.

(Cl) Accounts of mystics visions. Belong to the biographical genre above.

(C2) Manual on methods of how to attain visions.

(C3) Reports of visions written by the mystics themselves.

According to Keller, manuals on methods contain descriptions of objects that the mystic should experience on the mystical way. Special attention is paid to the interpretation of these objects in traditional doctrinal terms. It is therefore difficult to find descriptions of mystical experiences that are free of theological conceptions in these works.

On the other hand, Keller is open to the idea that studying reports of visions may provide researchers with new and interesting material. The few investigations that have been conducted in the field imply, however, that visions are projections of the myths and conceptions of the religion in question. So here, too, it is difficult to decide what the mystic actually experienced, Keller argues. <6>

(D) Commentaries on classic religious works. The mystic presents his view of traditional religious conceptions. The terms used for these interpretations are entirely doctrinal. It is very difficult to decide what experience, if any, lies behind the interpretation. <7>

(E) Dialogues between teacher and pupil. The purpose of the dialogue is to get the novice to adopt the teacher's views on theoretical issues. According to Keller, the dialogue is only indirectly related to what the teacher has experienced. It is therefore difficult to determine the teacher's experiences by studying dialogues. <8>

(F) Instructions on the mystical way in the form of, for instance, sermons or theoretical commentaries. Emphasis is laid on getting the pupil to adopt a certain religious idea. says Keller. Here the teacher does not primarily refer to his own experiences. <9>

(G) Prayers in verse or prose form. A prayer is directed towards a deity and expressed in traditional theological language. It is difficult to determine whether the prayer is based on personal mystical experiences or is an expression of a desire or longing for such. <10>

(H) Religious poetry or fiction. According to Keller, it is very difficult to decide what mystical experiences the author may have had, as we do not know what is a genuine description of mystical experiences of his own or what is fictional. < 11 >

Keller concludes that we cannot find the kind of relation to mystical experiences in any of the eight genres that would enable us to reach any decisions about the character of the experiences on the basis of the texts. <12>

Peter Moore has divided mystical works in a different way to Keller. He distinguishes between three types:

(I) Autobiographical reports of mystical experiences.

(II) Systematizations of mystical experiences into various types or stages on the mystical way. The author himself does not need to have had all these experiences to be able to deal with them systematically.

(III) Theological or liturgical works that treat religious ontological objects but in which the relation to these objects is not discussed in terms of mystical experiences.

A specific mystical text can, according to Moore, contain material from more than one group. He says that only the first two groups are relevant to the analysis of mystical experiences. <13>

If we accept Keller's view of the relation between mystical texts and mystical experiences, it is very difficult to identify a mystical experience by a scientific method. If we accept Moore's theory, on the other hand, the

door is open to the possibility of identification. Contrary to Keller, Moore claims that it is possible to find descriptions of mystical experiences in what he calls *autobiographical reports,* the nearest equivalent to this being Keller's *reports of visions.* Moore's second group, *commentaries on mystical experiences,* corresponds essentially to Keller's *manuals on methods.* Here Moore is more open than Keller to the idea that this source can be used for identification. *Theological commentaries,* Moore's third group and corresponding essentially to Keller's *commentaries on classic religious works,* cannot be used for identifying a mystical experience. Keller and Moore are in agreement here.

Keller and Moore thus agree that in certain groups/genres it is impossible to identify a mystical experience, even though they naturally do not speak in terms of identification. I have accepted this result. But so as not to close the door completely to the possibility of identifying a mystical experience, I wish to remain open to the possibility of finding utterances by mystics in autobiographies, dialogues and manuals on methods that will enable identification. Analysis of the texts in question must show if this is the case. <14>

(k) The conceptual framework that the mystic is acquainted with. We know that the meaning of many terms has changed over the years. It is therefore important to know what the terms meant at the time the mystic lived.

(1) Conceptual innovations. Most of the mystics that Stace deals with are innovators of mystical concepts. It is therefore important to try and discover what these new concepts stand for, so as not to be led into drawing false conclusions, for example, because the term is identical with another usual term.

(m) Other works written by the mystics concerned, as well as of and about the works from which the quotations are derived. Sometimes a mystical sentence/ word may be interpreted more easily and adequately by comparison with other utterances by the mystic in question.
In addition to studies of the linguistic and non-linguistic context, there are, in my opinion, other important factors to consider when approaching the mystical texts. These factors are as follows:

(n) Most mystics and researchers today are agreed that there are several stages that a mystic goes through on his way to the mystical experience. Within the Christian tradition a rough distinction is made between the stage of purification and the stage of illumination, both of which are stages on the mystical way, and the final stage, often called "unio mystica". <15> In yoga a distinction is made between different stages of samadhi < 16>, within Theravada Buddhism between four stages of jhanas <17>, and in Kabbala mysticism between different stages of ecstasy, etc. <18>. Even Stace distinguishes between two stages, extrovertive and introvertive mystical experiences. But. as we shall see, Stace has not paid attention to the fact that the distinction between different mystical stages affects the interpretation of the mystical sentences. I believe that the mystic's proposition about different stages may be of importance to the evaluation of the semantic functions of mystical sentences. What stage is the mystic talking about when we claim that the language here is functioning in an X way? Is it not possible that mystical sentences can function in one way to express a certain stage and in another to express, or perhaps even describe, another stage? What stage is the mystic talking about when he propounds a linguistic theory, for instance, that the sentences should be interpreted X or not X? Isn't it possible that the mystic wants to point out to us that *one* stage can be expressed in sentences with X but not with Y function, while another stage can be expressed with the help of sentences that have both X and Y function, and so on?

The uses of the word "ineffable" should, in my view, also be linked up with the question of different mystical stages. What stage is the mystic talking about when he says that the mystical experience is ineffable? Isn't it possible that certain stages can be ineffable, while others are not? Cannot certain stages be ineffable in one sense, while others are in another sense? <19>

One objection that can be made against the talk of different mystical stages is that it presupposes that I interpret certain mystical sentences in advance as functioning descriptively, as I am able to determine these

stages. But the stages we shall meet are not based on psychological but on philosophical distinctions. I have not, therefore, made any assumptions concerning what will be shown.

(o) In my view it is important to distinguish between two types of descriptions of mystical experiences. The mystic may, on the one hand, describe *what* he has experienced. I shall call this reporting the *content-related properties* of the mystical experience. Examples of this kind of property in Stace are *undifferentiated unity* and bliss. But the mystic may also describe the experience without our getting to know what he has actually experienced, that is, without our finding out what content the experience had. One of several ways of stating what I shall call the *non-content-related properties* of the mystical experience is by depicting what the mystical experience was not like in negative terms. We get to know something about the experience in this way, but irrespective of the number of negative expressions, we cannot decide what the mystic has, in fact, experienced, that is, the properties of the *content* of the experience. Another way of stating a non-content-related property is to express a property of relationship using positive terms. This property is often related to perception, for example, an alteration in the experience of time and space. From these properties we know that the mystical experience is not like sensory perception, but we do not know what the mystic has actually experienced. A third way is to state a property of disposition, for example, that the mystical experience results in the mystic being able to behave in a certain way. A fourth way, finally, is to state a property of category in positive terms, but without the mystic telling us about the content of the experience. Examples of such properties in Stace are ineffability and paradoxicality. That an experience is characterized by ineffability does not imply that we have identified what the mystic has actually experienced. The same applies to the property of paradoxicality, as long as we do not specify in what sense the experience is paradoxical. If, as Stace believes, paradoxicality means that, for instance, the experience of the ego both exists and does not exist, we have stated a content-related property, namely that. the mystic was aware of his ego during the experience.

I believe that the distinction between content-related properties and those that are not is a fruitful one for determining the semantic functions of mystical sentences and for explaining the phenomenon of ineffability. A mystic may use mystical sentences to report either its content-related properties or its non-contented-related ones. As we shall see, some of the mystics utterances about ineffability may be interpreted as if the mystical experience were not ineffable with regard to its non-contented-related properties but as if it were ineffable with regard to its content-related ones.

We can also relate the distinction between content- and non-content-related properties to the idea of different stages on the mystical way described above. The mystic perhaps believes that it is possible to describe both types of properties of the mystical experience at a certain stage, only non-contentrelated ones at another and neither type of property at a third, and so on.

(p) Finally, I shall also mention that I shall use the method that I briefly described at the end of Chapter 3. A theory that claims to be able to determine the semantic functions of mystical sentences in an adequate way should first study how the mystic actually uses language in a specific linguistic context, secondly, investigate whether the mystic in question explicitly formulates or implicitly assumes a linguistic theory, for instance, that the experience is in some way ineffable, that mystical words refer to mystical experiences, or that the sentences should be interpreted in a specific way. As my problem concerns the identification of mystical experiences, it is not necessary, in all cases, to analyse possible propositions about ineffability. If I find that the mystical sentences do not function descriptively, any explanation of the mystics use of the word "ineffable" will be superfluous. The determination of the function of the sentences has already shown that the mystic does not use the language to describe properties of the experience.

Before I report the results of my investigation, I should like briefly to discuss the way in which Stace tries to identify a mystical experience. Stace uses certain quotations, particularly those of present-day mystics , to elucidate mystical utterances from historical sources. He believes that mystics in earlier times were poor observers of their own experiences, a proposition that has been criticized, as we have seen (see 3.1.3). Stace is of the opinion that these classical mystics had similar experiences to those of later mystics whose

orientation was more psychological. This is evident when you compare the different descriptions, says Stace. However. first of all, it is very risky to compare two descriptions that are not very similar to each other. I can, for example, describe my sensual impressions of a stool by saying that the experience is characterized by flatness, brownness, littleness and roundness. Another person might use the expressions brownness and flatness to characterize the content of his experience but be looking at a penny. In this case . it is obvious that the contents of the experiences are different. It is therefore wrong to claim that the experience of the other person has the same characteristics as my own. The other person has not necessarily described his experience incompletely, as Stace assumes that classical mystics have done.

Secondly, to be able to compare two experiences with each other it is necessary to identify both of them first.

Thirdly, even if Stace's method is justifiable, he has used it incorrectly. To be able to compare two descriptions of experiences with each other. they have to be *descriptions.* But, as we shall see, few mystical utterances function descriptively. To compare, for instance, a text by a mystic from modern times, who uses language descriptively, with one by a historical mystic, who uses language instructively, is to compare two different things. It is therefore hazardous to maintain that the experiences of both mystics are characterized by the properties x1-Xn.

Besides the conceptual apparatus that I have used earlier, I shall also use the following terms:

(a) "mystical stage". This expression implies that there are several types of mystical experiences. I have only defined one of them. But I do not think that it is necessary to give an exact definition of what distinguishes the various stages from each other. As we shall see, to be able to carry out an analysis of the texts concerned it is sufficient to know that, according to the mystics and most researchers, there are several types of mystical experience.

(b) "theophilosophical" function. This term signifies that the mystic uses mystical sentences to put forward and/or discuss religious/philosophical doctrines. Thus the mystic does not use a sentence with a theophilosophical function to describe mystical experiences. So we cannot use sentences of this type for identifying mystical experiences.

(e) "analogical" function. A mystic uses a sentence analogously if he is speaking of the properties of the mystical experiences in terms of similarity. A sentence that functions analogously provides us with certain information about the mystical experience, but it is naturally impossible to identify mystical experiences with the help of sentences that only function analogously.

(d) "figurative" function. A mystic uses a sentence figuratively if he is speaking about the mystical experiences in an indirect manner and the sentences are not translatable into literal language. Of course, there is no possibility of identifying a mystical experience if mystical sentences function figuratively.

4. 1. The Result of the Analysis

As far as the result of my analysis is concerned, the 28 mystics that Stace cites may be divided into the following three groups:

(1)   There are 17 mystics in this group, that is, more than half of Stace's material. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to determine the semantic functions of mystical sentences or the meaning of the word "ineffable" by analysing these texts. The reasons for this are:

(a) The quotations are derived from works that have not been shown to have been written by the mystic in question or have even been written by several perhaps unknown authors. This applies to the quotations from

the Mandukya Upanishad, from Ramakrishna, Buddha, The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Lao-Tzu, Abu Yazid, Plotinus, Heinrich Suso and Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki.

(b) The utterance has not been translated into a language that can be comprehended either by me or Stace. This applies to the quotation from Al-Junayd.

(c) The source has only been available to Stace and not to me. This applies to the quotation from the pseudonym NM.

(d) The experience that is described has not been a mystical one according to Stace. This applies to the quotations from Jakob Böhme, Richard Maurice Bucke, Margaret Prescott Montague and John Masefield.

(e) The works from which the quotations are derived have been works of fiction. Here we find the quotations from Mahmud Shabistari and Thomas Stearns Eliot.

(II) This group includes mystics who, according to my analysis, do not use the mystical sentences concerned descriptively. This applies to the quotations from Aurobindo Ghose, Levi Yitzschak from Berditchev, Abraham Abulafia, Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross. In these quotations the mystical sentences function theophilosophically or instructively.

(III) In the third group we find the mystical utterances in which the sentences appear to function descriptively but where an analysis of how the mystic uses the word "ineffable" shows that they mystical sentences function analogously/figuratively, but not descriptively. This applies to utterances from Alfred Tennyson, John Addington Symonds, Martin Buber and Arthur Koestler.

(IV) In the last group the utterances in question contain sentences that function descriptively but only with regard to non-content-related properties. This applies to utterances from Jan van Ruysbroeck.

I shall now give an account of the analyses that I have made of the texts concerned. These analyses may perhaps tire the reader, but as I claim that Stace has in no instance succeeded in showing that mystical sentences function descriptively, it is necessary to show that this is the case by giving a complete account of how I have reached this conclusion.

After presenting the analyses I shall make a final evaluation of all the function and ineffability theories and discuss the implications for the main problem. Finally, I shall give a short account of what the consequences of the result of my investigation will be for several other fields within research into mysticism.

4.2.   An Examination of Stace's Interpretations of Certain Specific Mystical Texts

As we have seen, to understand and interpret mystical words/sentences, it is necessary in my view to, among other things, take their linguistic and non-linguistic context into consideration. A presentation of each mystic, the tradition surrounding him, his personality, theology, etc. would require considerably more space than I have at my disposal. As my readers will mainly consist of researchers into mysticism, I have therefore assumed that the reader is generally acquainted with these mystics. Thus, the factors that we should know to be able to answers the questions in the analysis will be presented only briefly.

4.2. 1. Texts That are Impossible/Have not Been Possible to Analyse

(a) The quotations have been derived from works that have not been shown to be written by the mystic concerned or have been written by several, even unknown, authors. This applies to the Mandukya

Upanishad, and works of Ramakrishna, Buddha, The Tibetan Book of the Dead, Lao-Tzu, Abil Yazid, Plotinus, Heinrich Suso and Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki.

The *Upanishads* were written by several authors over a long period of time. We do not know who these authors were. <20 In common with most Vedic texts, they have probably been passed down from father to son in a long oral tradition before they were written down. <21 > There are several versions of some of the Upanishads, as the oral tradition was in the charge of more than one family. <22> The Mandukya Upanishad, from which Stace cites <23>, is a Mantra Upanishad and written in verse. <24> It is obvious that today it is impossible to establish what a mystic who may have created a Upanishad really experienced. He did not write the Upanishad himself, it is written in verse and is therefore of doubtful use in trying to identify mystical experiences. We do not know how the possible mystic would have used the language or what he would have meant by the word "ineffable". I therefore think it is a risky undertaking to use quotations from the Mandukya Upanishad for identifying mystical experiences.

None of the utterances that are ascribed to *Gadadhar Chatterji* (1836-1886) (Ramakrishna) have been written or dictated by him but have been penned by, among others, Mahendranath Gupta and Swami Saradananda, both disciples of Ramakrishna. It is therefore impossible to determine how Ramakrishna would have described his mystical experiences, if he thought it was possible at all. As already indicated, great difficulties arise when using second-hand sources for identifying mystical experiences. <25>

Till date no material that has been written by *Siddhartha Gautama* ("Buddha") (ca 563 - 483 BC) himself, or that has been dictated by him, has come to the knowledge of the researchers. Stace himself is aware of this <26> but has failed to draw the natural conclusion. <27> As certain utterances ascribed to Buddha are, according to Stace, similar to some in the Mandukya Upanishad, Stace concludes that Buddha had had basically the same experience. Here, however, Stace is comparing two second-hand sources, possibly written down by non-mystics, and the conclusion is therefore speculative. As mentioned before, it is a risky undertaking to analyse second-hand sources in order to identify mystical experiences. <28>

We do not know now what person or persons originally wrote *Bardo Thödol (The Tibetan Book of the Dead).* The contents of the book have probably been passed down orally and written down at a later stage. Today there a number of different versions of the work in question. Unfortunately, we do not know whether the original author of Bardo Thödol wrote in the capacity of a mystic or just wished to expound a doctrine of what happens after death. <29> It is clear from this that we cannot determine how the author would have used the language or his possible views on the phenomenon of ineffability. I therefore conclude that it is very difficult to identify any mystical experience on the basis of Stace's quotations from Bardo Thödol. <30>

Most history researchers today are agreed that the person who is called *Lao-Tzu* (Lao-Tsi) has never existed but is legendary. The work *Tao-te-ching,* which is traditionally ascribed to Lao-Tzu, is a compilation of the works of many unknown writers over several epochs. Stace is also aware of this <3l> but, as in the case of Buddha, has not drawn the natural conclusions as far as the possibility of identifying a mystical experience is concerned. Stace states, however, in *The Teachings of the Mystics* that the quotation from Lao-Tzu does not describe a mystical experience but represents, if anything, methods for achieving mystical experiences or, alternatively, that the quotation represents a doctrinal interpretation. But Stace claims that the author/authors must have had mystical experiences to be able to write *Tao-te-ching.* <32> This may be so, but Stace has not shown that this was the case.

No authentic writings of *Abu Yazid Tayfur B'-Isa B Suruishan Al-Bistami (? -874/877/878)* remain. <33> As in the case of Buddha, Ramakrishna and LaoTzu, the utterances have been ascribed to him. To attempt at the present time to identify Abu Yazid's mystical experiences on the basis of the quotation <34> from the work ascribed to him is therefore, in my opinion, very difficult. We know nothing about his views on the question of ineffability. Nor do we know what semantic functions his sentences may have had.

Much of what we know of *Plotinus* (205-270) stems from Porphyrus, one of his pupils. Porphyrus edited Plotinus lecture notes and divided these into six books of nine chapters each, hence the name *The Enneads.* It was a difficult undertaking as Plotinus language was hard to understand. The fact that Plotinus sight failed towards the end of his life did not make the work easier, of course, as he was unable to correct Porphyrus manuscript. <35> Furthermore, Porphyrus admits that he made certain additions. Unfortunately, he does not say where. <36> So today we do not know what is written by Plotinus and what is an addition by Porphyrus. This also applies to the quotations that Stace uses. But the problem is even more complex. The three quotations that Stace selected cannot be used to identify Plotinus experience. Stace took the first quotation from Rudolf Otto's classic work *Mysticism East and West* (1932). <37> According to Otto, the passage comes from Ennead Number 5, Chapter 8 in Stephen Mackenna's translation. I have studied all the editions of Mackenna's translation without finding the passage in question.

Stace's second quotation is from a letter that Plotinus wrote to Flaccus. <38> But, as Berdie has pointed out, the letter is not genuine. <39>

The last quotation comes, according to Stace, from Ennead Number 6, Chapter 9, Section 11. <40> But this source was found to be incorrect. Nor is it William Ralph Inge's or Arthur Hillary Armstrong's translation, either of which Stace has used in other connections. <4l>

My examination of Stace's analysis of Plotinus utterances leads me to conclude that it is difficult to know whether Plotinus has written the utterances concerned, and that Stace has omitted to refer to verifiable sources or has used a source that was inauthentic. It is therefore very difficult, on the basis of the utterances used by Stace, to investigate the linguistic context and to determine how Plotinus would have used the mystical language or his views on the phenomenon of ineffability.

Stace's quotation of *Heinrich Suso* (1295/1300-1366) comes from Suso's autobiography *The Life of a Servant.* <42> If we disregard the fact that the views of researchers diverge as to the authenticity of this work <43>, it is difficult to identify Suso's mystical experience because we do not know exactly what in *Life* has been written by Suso himself. *The Life* consists of accounts of Suso's life and excerpts from his letters. But Suso has not written down all this himself but it has been done by his friend Elsbeth Stagel. Later Suso edited and added certain comments on Stagel's manuscript. <44> It is impossible for a layman to decide what has really been written by Suso and what is Stagel's account of conversations with and letters from Suso. As far as I know, no attempts have yet been made to distinguish between the two authors. Stace has not shown that the passages he cites have been written by Suso himself. To claim then, as Stace does, that we can identify Suso's mystical experience by means of this second-hand source is therefore rash.

Stace asserts that it is possible to identify a mystical experience via utterances by *Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki* (1870-1966). <45> It is true that Stace admits, in *The Teachings of the Mystics,* that Suzuki's utterances ought, if anything, to be classified as "great mystical writings" and not as descriptions of mystical experiences <46>, but in Mysticism *and Philosophy,* Stace actually uses utterances of Suzuki to identify a mystical experience. Suzuki's writings should, however, be regarded as second-hand sources. He does not write directly about his own experiences (Stace had arrived at this conclusion earlier) but attempts, as an academic philosopher, to systematize Zen teachings and techniques. This applies to all but one of the utterances that Stace quotes. <47> There it does seem that Suzuki is actually talking about his own experiences. The utterance is derived from an anthology compiled by William Barrett. <M> But the passage is not included in any of the works Barrett claims to have consulted. I do not know where he has found the utterance. Furthermore, it is evident from the linguistic context that Suzuki does not express anything about his own experiences. On the basis of what has been said above, I am forced to conclude that Stace has not shown that he can use Suzuki's utterances to identify a mystical experience.

(b) The utterances are written in a language that is foreign both to me and to Stace, preventing determination of both the semantic function and the views on the phenomenon of ineffability. This includes an utterance from *Abu'l-Qasim Al-Junayd ibn Muhammed ibn al-Junayd al-khazzaz al Qawariri* (?-ca 910). Stace has

taken the quotation from Al-Junayd from Margaret Smith's classic *Readings From the Mystics of Islam* (1950). <49> However, Smith has, in turn, taken the quotation in question out of Abu Nasr *´Abdullah ibn 'Ari as-Sarraj at-Tus-i's Kitab al luma 'fi at-Tasawwuf,* pages 29-59. <50> Smith has reduced the original 30 pages to only 30 lines. It is obvious that it is very difficult for Stace and for myself to decide what semantic function the sentences in the passage have without having access to the linguistic context. Unfortunately, as far as I know, the work of As-Sarraj has not been translated into any language that is comprehensible to me or to Stace. Thus, it is impossible to determine the semantic functions of the sentences or to clarify Al-Junayd's views, if any, on the phenomenon of ineffability on the basis of the quotation concerned. Stace should also have drawn this conclusion. <5l>

(c) The source has been available to Stace but not to me. Here we find utterances under the pseudonym *NM,* which stands for one of Stace's colleagues. Stace asked NM to describe a mystical experience that he had had in connection with taking mescaline. It was reported both verbally and in writing. <52> Unfortunately, Stace has not given the reference to either the verbal or written report. He has only given an account of parts of the written report. He admits this himself. It is thus very difficult for me to check the quotations, investigate the linguistic context or discuss Stace's interpretation of NM's utterances. Furthermore, Stace has identified the properties that were most important to him by means of direct discussion with NM. Owing to the abovementioned difficulties, I believe it is very difficult to identify NM's mystical experience from the passages cited by Stace.

(d) The experience that the mystic describes is not a mystical one according to Stace. This applies to quotations from Jakob Böhme, Richard Maurice Bucke, Margerat Prescott Montague and John Masefield.

Jakob Böhme (1575-1624)

Stace's quotation from Böhme is to be found in the work *The Aurora (Morgonr6the im Aufgang):*

In this light my spirit saw through all things and into all creatures and I recognized God in grass and plants. <53>

Stace maintains that the sentence functions descriptively. <54> Böhme is describing an extrovertive mystical experience. He perceives the world of phenomena and, simultaneously, God in the world of phenomena.

Howard Brinton's version of Böhme's utterance, which Stace has based his comments on, is, however, a condensation of Böhme's text. Brinton has also cited Böhme incorrectly. Böhme writes the following, in which Stace's quotation is to be found between the two words that are italicized:

> 12. But the greatness of the triumphing that was in the spirit I cannot express, either in speaking or writing; neither can it be compared to anything, but to that wherein the life is generated in the midst of death, and it is like the resurrection from the dead.

> 13. *In* this light my spirit suddenly saw through all, and in and by all the creatures, even in herbs and grass it knew *God*, who he is, and how he is, and what his will is: And suddenly in that light my will was set on by a mighty impulse, to describe the being of God. <55>

But is it really reasonable to interpret the expression "saw", as Stace does, that is, as referring to perception instead of as standing for a vision or an intuitive insight? After commenting on how difficult it is to describe the parts of something that is not divisible, Böhme writes:

> Nor must thou think that I have climbed up aloft into heaven, and beheld it with my carnal or fleshly eyes. <56>

When Böhme talks about what God is, he writes:

> In my faculties or powers I am as blind a man as ever was, and am able to do nothing; but in the spirit of God my innate spirit seeth through ALL, though not always with long stay or continuance; <57>

In another work, Vom *Dreifachen Leben des Menchen,* Böhme writes:

> Christus spricht: Ich bin das Licht der Welt, wer mir nachfolget, der wird das Licht des ewigen Lebens haben. Joh. 8:12. Er weiset uns nicht zu den Heuchlern, Mardern und Zänckern, sondern nur zu sich; in seinem Licht sollen wir sehen, nach den inwendigen Augen, so sehen wir Ihn, dann Er ist das Licht. <58>

In my opinion, these quotations are sufficient to enable us to conclude that Böhme did not use perception during the mystical experience. My interpretation is supported by Brinton, Underhill and Martensen. Brinton writes:

> This Divine Life is known internally through mystic union with it (Verstand), not through outward rational knowledge. <59>

Stace uses a quotation from Underhill that is supposed to show that Böhme's experience was perceptual. Stace cites:

> He believed that it was only a fancy, and in order to banish it from his mind he went out upon the green. But here he remarked that he gazed into the very heart of things, the very herbs and grass, and that actual nature harmonized with what he had seen. <60>

If we disregard the fact that this is not a quotation from Underhill herself but from Martensen's book about Böhme, it is interesting to note that Stace has cited both Martensen and Underhill incorrectly. Martensen writes, namely, in the last sentence "harmonized with what he had *inwardly* seed". <6l>

Stace has excluded visions from the class of mystical experiences. <62> As the conclusion drawn from my analysis is that Böhme's experience cannot be classified either as an introvertive or an extrovertive mystical experience, but is probably a vision. Böhme's experience is not a mystical one in Stace's view. Consequently, he has not shown that he can use Böhme's utterance to identify a mystical experience.

Richard Maurice Bucke (1837-1902)

Stace cites Bucke:

> I had spent the evening in a great city, with two friends reading and discussing poetry and philosophy... I had a long drive home in a hansom cab to my lodging. My mind ... was calm and peaceful ... All at once, without warning of any kind, I found myself wrapped in a flame-coloured cloud. For an instant 1 thought of fire ... somewhere ... in that great city; in the next I knew that the fire was in myself. Directly afterward there came upon me a sense of exaltation, of immense joyousness accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination impossible to describe. Among other things I did not merely come to believe but I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter. but is, on the contrary, a living Presence. I became conscious in myself of eternal life... I saw that the cosmic order is such that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all; that the foundation of the world ... is ... love... The vision lasted a few seconds and was gone, but the memory of it and the sense of reality it left has remained during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed. I knew that what the vision showed was true ... That conviction ... has never been lost. <63>

Stace maintains that the mystical sentences function descriptively. Bucke has experienced that everything in the universe is living. The universe does not consist of a multiplicity of living beings but of a single living Presence. The latter implies unity, according to Stace, that everything is felt to be One. At the same time Bucke experiences. through ordinary perception, the unity in each thing. Stace also claims that the experience is ineffable. <64>

In his now classic work *Cosmic Consciousness,* Bucke has described the mystical experience in detail. Some of its properties are as follows:

(a) Experience of a pink or flame-coloured light. This light is only an inner light and does not correspond to light outside the mystic's consciousness. <65>

(b) Experience of and intellectual insight into the life and order of the cosmos. That everything in the cosmos is living, is infinite and is love. <66> The mystic not only knows this intuitively but sees it before him in a vision. <67>

(c) Experience of joy and happiness <68>, of moral uplift <69>, and of being immortal, etc. <70>

As is evident from these properties, the experience has the character of a vision. Bucke sees what he is describing in front of him. His arguments do not imply that perception functioned normally during the mystical experience. On the contrary, he asserts that the experience was characterized by an inward vision. In a commentary on a mystic called "CP", Bucke writes:

> Here again is a distinct and absolute mark proving the writer to have had the Cosmic Sense. No merely self conscious man knows of God as he knows of mundane matters of fact. Every Cosmic Conscious man does so. He knows by actual inward vision just as he knows (by self consciousness) that he is a distinct entity. <7l>

When Bucke speaks of Jesus, he writes:

> The expression: "He saw the heavens rent asunder," describes well enough the oncoming of the Cosmic Sense, which is (as has been said) instantaneous, sudden, and much as if a veil were with one sharp jerk torn from the eye of the mind, letting the sight pierce through. <72>

Consequently, as Bucke's experience is an example of a vision, it cannot be classified as a mystical experience according to Stace's definition. Therefore, Stace has not shown that he can use Bucke's utterances to identify a mystical experience.

Margaret Prescott Montague (1878-1955)

Stace admits that the utterance by the authoress Montague does not indicate that she has had a complete mystical experience, but only a hint of one. <U>

Stace cites Montague:

> Entirely unexpectedly (for I have never dreamed of such a thing) my eyes were opened and for the first time in my life I caught a glimpse of the ecstatic beauty of reality ... its unspeakable joy, beauty, and importance.... I saw no new thing but I saw all the usual things in a miraculous new light - in what I believe is their true light .... I saw ... how wildly beautiful and joyous, beyond any words of mine to describe, is the whole of life. Every human being moving across that porch, every sparrow that flew, every branch tossing in the wind was caught in and was part of the whole mad ecstasy of loveliness, of joy, of importance, of intoxication of life.... I saw the actual loveliness which was

always there.... My heart melted out of me in a rapture of love and delight.... Once out of all the grey days of my life I have looked into the heart of reality; I have witnessed the truth. (Montague's italics) <74>

Stace maintains that Montague is describing how she experienced bliss, and that what she experienced did not have the character of a hallucination but of something real. The experience was also ineffable and had the character of transformed perception. <75> Stace admits, however, that Montague does not mention either unity, that everything is living or the divine element, properties typical of an extrovertive experience. Stace therefore concludes that the experience is closer to an aesthetic than a mystical one owing to its emphasis on beauty and joy. <76>

Montague does not, in fact, mention any of the properties that I have used in my definition of the concept of mystical experience, and which Stace had implicitly accepted. The experience is characterized neither by absence of thoughts, absence of perception nor lack of the sense of space, time and ego. It does not seem likely that experiencing great joy and simultaneously feeling it to be something real is sufficient for concluding that it is a mystical experience. The same may be said about the experience being ineffable. There are many types of experiences that are regarded as being ineffable in some way. Many experiences could in that case be classified as mystical without being so. Moreover, Montague's experience is characterized by extreme joy, something that Stace claims is not a mystical phenomenon. <77>

I therefore conclude that Stace has not shown that Montague's experience may be regarded as an incomplete mystical experience. Thus, it is very difficult to identify a mystical experience on the basis of the passage cited using a scientific method.

Finally, with regard to *John Masefield* (1878-1967), who according to Stace is not an example of a typical mystic, Stace himself has admitted that the experience is visionary in character, hence that it is not a mystical experience according to his own definition. <78>

(e) The works from which the quotations in question have been taken have been works of fiction. It is therefore very difficult to determine what is a description of a personal mystical experience and what is imaginary. Here may be found utterances from Mahmud Shabistari and Thomas Stearns Eliot.

Stace's quotation from *Sad-ud-Din Mahmud Shabistari* (ca 1287-ca 1320) has been taken from Smith's *Readings from the Mystics of Islam.* <79> Here Smith has translated parts of the poem *Gulshan-i-Raz (The Rosegarden of Mystery).* <80> As the work is fiction, it is very difficult to identify a mystical experience with its help. <8l> The same argument may be put forward concerning Stace's quotation of *Thomas Stearns Eliot* (1888-1965). <82> We do not know what in his poetry is imaginary or what may possibly not be.

4.2.2. Texts in Which the Mystical Sentences do not Function Descriptively

The utterances in these quotations cannot in my view function descriptively. Instead, their function is theophilosophical or instructive. This group of texts includes utterances from Aurobindo Ghose, R Levi Yitzchack from Berditchev, Abraham Abulafia, Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross.

Aurobindo (Orobindo) Ghose (1872-1950)

Aurobindo's philosophy in *The Life Divine,* from which Stace took his quotations, means briefly, according to K R Srinivasa Iyengar, that Aurobindo claims that man may participate in-what he calls "the divine life". But, unlike earlier Indian philosophers, the goal for Aurobindo is not to break the bonds of reincarnation and to achieve personal immortality. He emphasizes that life may be lived close to God, here and now. This ought to be our goal and this goal can be already achieved in this life. <83> This goal should not be reached only on a personal plane but also for mankind as a whole. <84>

Aurobindo discusses different conceptions of reality. The materialist emphasizes material things at the expense of spiritual ones, the ascetic spiritual things at the expense of material ones. <85> But neither the materialist nor the ascetic can lead mankind towards a harmonious life. According to Aurobindo, reality is by nature both mind and matter and also transcends both these aspects without ceasing, to be one. <86> *The Life Divine,* which is a metaphysical treatise <87>, is a 1000-page development of these fundamental ideas. <88>.

Matter and Mind are aspects of the same reality, which develops and has developed according to the hierarchical scheme Matter, Life, Psyche, Mind, Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness-Force and Existence. The last-mentioned is the ultimate reality, which Aurobindo also calls "Pure Existence". The ultimate reality is "Will and Force", "blissful Existence" and "Sadchidananda". The world and its multiplicity and its suffering have been created and are created by means of the descent of reality through the various stages. <89> The process of stepping upward and downward takes place simultaneously. <90> All elements in the different stages exist at the same time. Matter cannot exist without Mind and Mind without Matter. <9l>

At present man has reached awareness of the stage Mind. <92> But man can reach the stage Supermind, which provides knowledge of reality as it is. Here the multiplicity of the world disappears, duality is transformed into a manifestation from out of the Ultimate. Mankind realizes that everything is the
Dance of Shiva, who is creating out of himself throughout eternity. <93> The other part of *Life Divine* deals with how man and mankind can raise themselves to a higher level of consciousness. <94> As Stace only takes his quotations from the first four chapters, I shall not give an account of this part of Aurobindo's philosophy.

Stace is aware that Aurobindo primarily deals with philosophical questions, but he has omitted, as we shall see, to draw the natural conclusions from this as far as the possibility of identifying a mystical experience is concerned. <95> Stace maintains that Aurobindo describes mystical experiences in two utterances. The first quotation is taken from Chapter 1V, which is entitled "Reality Omnipresent". Aurobindo speaks here of the two aspects of reality, Matter and Mind, and how these may be combined in man's consciousness. The section between the words that are italicized indicates the part that Stace used:

> Man, too, becomes perfect only when he has found within himself that absolute calm and passivity of the Brahman and supports by it with the same divine tolerance and the same divine bliss a free and inexhaustible activity. *Those* who have thus possessed the Calm within can perceive always welling out from its silence the perennial supply of the energies that work in the *universe.* It is not therefore, the truth of the Silence to say that it is in its nature a rejection of the cosmic activity. The apparent incompatibility of the two states is an error of the limited Mind which, accustomed to trenchant oppositions of affirmation and denial and passing suddenly from one pole to the other, is unable to conceive of a comprehensive consciousness vast and strong enough to include both in a simultaneous embrace. <96>

Stace comments on the above passage as follows:

> This, as it seems to me, is as nearly an expression of a pure uninterpreted experience evidently the experience of Aurobindo himself, although he does not use the first person singular - as one can find. <97>

I should like to deny, as we shall see later, the idea that Aurobindo's utterance is a description of an uninterpreted experience. My opinion is supported by Masson and Masson, who write:

> One can only conclude that something about this pitiful sentence of Aurobindo rang an affective chord in Stace himself, for there is certainly nothing in it that could possibly make anybody cite it as

an example of direct experience. What is "the energies which work in the universe" if not a particularly grandiose form of interpretation? <98>

Stace believes that Aurobindo's sentences function symbolically, and that the Symbols can be translated into a language that functions literally. According to Stace, the mystical words "calm" and "silence" are symbols for rest and inactivity, two properties of the mystical experience. <99>

But Stace commits an error here because he has not paid attention to what Aurobindo actually writes. <100> Aurobindo writes the word "Calm" with a capital C, while Stace uses a small c when discussing it. One can then be led to believe that calm does not stand for an ontological entity. Stace has used an edition that is not identical with the original. <100> But it is also clear from the sentence that precedes Stace's quotation that the word "Calm" is an ontological term. Aurobindo writes there "that absolute calm and passivity of the Brahman". There the mystical word "calm" is a description of a characteristic of Brahman. To refer to this characteristic of Brahman, Aurobindo uses the word calm with a capital C in the next sentence. The word "Calm" cannot therefore be interpreted as a symbol of a property of a mystical experience. If the word in question should be used both philosophically and psychologically, Stace must show that this is the case. But he has not done so.

Consequently, the mystical word "silence" cannot be interpreted as a psychological concept either. The concept of silence refers to the ontological entity Calm and expresses the passive aspect of reality. This is also evident from the sentence that follows Stace's quotation. "Silence" is given there with a capital S. So the mystical word "silence"- is not used as a symbol of a property of a mystical experience.

Stace also interprets the mystical expression "energies which work" symbolically. According to Stace, it stands for:

> ... that self-differentiation of the empty undifferentiated unity which is the creation of the world. And this is not merely a metaphysical theory but something directly experienced by these men. (Stace is also referring to Meister Eckhart in this connection.) <102>

Stace claims, in other words, that the mystical sentences function symbolically here. But further on in the same publication Stace maintains the exact opposite:

> There is no reason whatever for supposing that this language is symbolic <103>

Stace seems unable to decide. But let us see whether the mystical sentences here could function descriptively. Stace maintains that Aurobindo is describing an experience that is characterized by undifferentiated unity and that this unity is active and out of itself produces the world with its multiplicity. In my opinion it is possible to interpret Aurobindo's utterance to mean that the mystic can experience how Brahman in his passive aspect is combined with Brahman in his dynamic aspect. Aurobindo uses the word "perceive" here, as Stace has correctly pointed out. But Aurobindo does not say anything about the psychological characteristics of this experience. It is not evident from the linguistic context that Aurobindo is describing an experience of undifferentiated unity. Aurobindo writes in a philosophical sense, and the sentences thus function theophilosophically, not descriptively. <104>

Stace's second quotation is taken from Chapter III of *The Life Divine* and deals with the problem that arises if mind rather than matter is emphasized. Aurobindo writes (and here too, the passage selected by Stace is shown between the words that are italicized):

> And then arises the question which first occurred to us, whether this transcendence necessarily also a rejection. What relation has this universe to the Beyond?

For at the gates of the Transcendent stands that mere and perfect Spirit describe Upanishads, luminous, pure, sustaining the world but inactive in it, without sit energy, without flaw of duality, without scar of division, unique, identical, free of appearance of relation and of multiplicity - the pure Self of the Adwaitins, the inactive Brahman, the transcendent Silence. And the mind when it passes those gates sue without intermediate transitions, receives a sense of the unreality of the world and the sole reality of the Silence which is one of the most powerful and convincing experiences of the human mind is *capable. < 105 >*

In The Teachings of the Mystics Stace has spelt the word "Spirit" correctly, i.e., with a capital S. But in Mysticism *and Philosophy,* from the same year he spells "spirit" with a small s. This action can lead the reader to believe "Spirit" stands for a psychological concept and not a philosophical one.

In this passage, too, Stace claims that the word "Silence" symbolizes experience of what Stace calls "pure consciousness". <106> The fact that expression "Silence" is spelt with a capital S does not appear to have concerned Stace. Here he goes from theology to psychology. The word "Silence", stands, as we have seen, for the inactive aspect of Brahman in the Aurobindo philosophy. Stace has not shown how the word can be a symbol for a mystical experience that is characterized by pure consciousness and a void, nor can it be understood from the context. It is clear to me that the mystical sentence function theophilosophically here.

Aurobindo refers in the passage to the relation between atman and Brahman. He hints that an experience of Brahman is possible but does not say anything about the psychological characteristics of this experience. To say that the Transcendent in the form of the Spirit is free from duality is not the same as claiming that the experience of the Transcendent is characterized by undifferentiated unity. Stace has not shown that Aurobindo has used the terms in question in both a psychological and a philosophical sense.

Stace also maintains that Aurobindo describes the mystical experience as being characterized by paradoxicality. The paradox lies in this case in the fact that something that does not exist, the Transcendent, gives rise to everything that exists. <107> But this interpretation is not likely in the light of Aurobindo's philosophy. We have seen that to Aurobindo reality has different aspects. Everything is real, even the transcendent aspect. He even calls the highest stage of reality "Existence". To Aurobindo it is not paradoxical to maintain that the world arises out of the Transcendent. Moreover, Aurobindo is not speaking of experiences here. He is speaking in philosophical terms.

The conclusion to be drawn from my analysis is that Stace has not shown that the philosophical concepts that Aurobindo uses also function as psychological ones. Both Aurobindo's utterances primarily function theophilosophically, not descriptively. The language is very poetic and may even function evocatively as well. This is of no consequence to my problem, however. I have shown that Stace cannot, with the help of these texts, find support for his theory that there are mystical sentences that function descriptively. In other words, Stace has not shown that it is possible to identify a mystical experience by means of Aurobindo's two utterances.

R Levi Yitzschak from Berditchev (1740-1809)

Stace's quotation from Yitzschak, the Hasidic mystic, comes from Gerschom G Scholem's classic work *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism (1941).* Levi Yitzschak writes:

> There are those who serve God with the human intellect, and others whose gaze is fixed on Nothing... He who is granted this supreme experience loses the reality of his intellect, but when he returns from such contemplation to the intellect, he finds it full of divine and inflowing splendor. <108>

Stace maintains that this utterance allows us to identify Yitzschak's mystical experience as characterized by an undifferentiated void. This is, according to Stace, the meaning of the word "Nothing", which stands for absence of empirical content. <109>

Unfortunately, it has been impossible for me to study the work in which the passage is included. It is namely in Hebrew. As far as I know, Yitzschak's work has not been published in any language that is comprehensible to me or to Stace. But I have received help from an authority in the field, the expert on Jewish religion and Kabbala, Stephen T Katz. Katz has, namely, explicitly criticized Stace's interpretation of the quotation concerned.

Katz begins by describing how the Jewish mystic has developed religious conceptions from childhood with the help of pictures, symbols, creeds, rituals, etc. The Jew has to learn that God, compared with everything else, is characterized by being radically different. It is not possible to know anything about God. The word "Nothing" in the above quotation is, according to Katz, a translation of the Hebrew "Ayin", which in kabbala stands for Eyn Sof, God as he is in himself before his first manifestation as the first Sefirah Keter. <110> No man can have contact with God at this level. "Ayin" has, according to a twelfth-century text,

> ..more being than any other being in the world, but since it is simple, and all other simple things are complex when compared with its simplicity, so in comparison it is called 'nothing ('Ayin). < 111 >

Katz thinks that the reason why Stace has interpreted the word "Nothing" as denoting a mystical experience characterized by undifferentiated unity is that he has not taken the context of the word in question into consideration. < 112>

The goal of the Jewish mystic, called "devekuth", is not union with or being absorbed in God but more, as Katz puts it, "... a loving intimacy, a clinging to God". The mystic is aware of the great gap that exists between man and God. <113>

I conclude from Katz's arguments that the mystical sentences in the quotation in question do not function descriptively but primarily theophilosophically. Stace has not shown that we can find descriptions of properties of a mystical experience in Levi Yitschack's utterance.

Abraham ben Samuel Abulafia (1240-1291)

The quotation from Abulafia is also taken from Scholem's *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism:*

> All the inner forces and the hidden souls in man are distributed and differentiated in the bodies. It is, however, in the nature of all of them that when their knots are untied they return to their origin, which is one without any duality and which comprises the multiplicity. <114>

Stace maintains that the mystical sentences function here in a way that is partially symbolic. The mystical expression "their knots are untied" stands for the release of the soul from its bounds, a release that is a prerequisite for the soul returning to its origin, what Stace calls "the Infinite One". Stace cites Scholem, who clarifies Abulafia's utterance in the following way:

> ... there are certain barriers which separate the personal existence of the soul from the stream of cosmic life... There is a dam which keeps the soul confined ... and protects it against the divine stream .. which flows all around it. <115>

What is it that limits the soul? Stace asks and answers with the help of Scholem:

> The answer is that sensible forms and images produce finite consciousness. And these disappear in introvertive experience. <116>

My contextual interpretation of Stace is that he maintains that Abulafia uses the sentences descriptively and that he describes a mystical experience as characterized by absence of perception and images.

One of the requirements for being able to interpret a mystical utterance is that we should have access to the linguistic context. Unfortunately, I do not have this here. I have no command of Hebrew, and nor does Stace. < 117 > But Scholem, who has devoted a whole chapter to Abulafia in *Major Trends,* has come to my aid. It is evident from Scholem's presentation that the work in which the passage in question is included deals with methods for achieving mystical experiences. Abulafia developed what he called "Hokhmath ha-Tseruf", "science of combination of letters", which briefly means that the mystic contemplates the specific letters of the Hebrew alphabet and their form, which have no meaning in themselves. A kabbalistic doctrine exists in the background here; this says that everything in creation is an expression of and partakes in God's Name. Certain letters in Hebrew express God's "pure" thoughts and are therefore excellent objects for contemplation. These objects can make the mind transcend, which cannot happen if the mystic contemplates objects of perception or abstract thoughts. In other words, even the intellect should be transcended. < 118>

Even though I have not had access to the linguistic context, I believe that it is more likely that, in the quotation concerned, Abulafia is speaking of methods of achieving mystical experiences rather than, as Stace claims, describing his own mystical experiences. The sentences function instructively, in other words, but they function theophilosophically as well. Abulafia speaks of returning to one's origin, that is, God, who is unity without duality. However, whether the sentences function instructively and/or theophilosophically has no bearing on my problem. Stace has not shown that they function descriptively, and it is more likely that they function non-descriptively. Thus, Stace has not show that it is possible to identify Abulafia's mystical experience by a scientific method on the basis of the passages cited.

Meister Johannes Eckhart von Hochheirn (ca 1260-1327/1328)

According to Edmund Colledge and James M Clark, Meister Eckhart's conception of God and views on mystical experiences may be summed up briefly as follows. God is pure being, absolute being, the ultimate reality. Eckhart distinguishes between God of the Trinity and God beyond God, called "the Godhead". The former comprises three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, while the latter is undifferentiated. < 119> God is Absolute Unity <120> and creates the world out of a single uniform principle by means of the three persons. < 121 > God is eternal and His actions are also eternal. The acts of creation are therefore one and undifferentiated. The Father's begetting of the Son and the Holy Ghost's proceeding from the Father and the Son take place unceasingly and in an eternal now. < 122> Through or in *Seelenfünklein,* one of the capacities or parts of the soul, the mystical unity between the soul and God is reached. God exists in the soul through mercy, for which reason the birth of the Son also takes place in the soul as the Son is begotten by the Father in eternity. Eckhart says that Christ is born in the soul of man in this mystical stage. Christ is born in us, suffers in us, is crucified, dies and is buried in us, and it is in us He rises again. <123> In the last stage on the mystical way, breaking through to the divine source, the soul becomes one with the Godhead, a unity that is completely without distinctions. <124>

It is evident from the above presentation that Eckhart has developed a specific Christian theology. The language in his work therefore primarily functions theophilosophically. <125>

Stace has cited several utterances in which he claims to be able to identify Eckhart's mystical experiences. Before I analyse these utterances I just want to mention that I have limited myself to analysing only the utterances for which Stace has given an exact verifiable source. <126>

Stace cites the sermon "Good hinders the best":

> 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... <127>

According to Stace, these sentences function descriptively. Eckhart is describing that he experienced unity without distinctions. Stace translates the symbols *barren* and *desert* into the literally meant expressions "empty", "void" and "without any distinctions". In the experience there are no forms, that is, entities that are characterized by limitations. No activity takes place as activity presupposes distinctions. Nothing can move in a total void as there is nothing that can move. Finally, the experience is characterized by dissolution of the ego, expressed by the phrase "it is sunk and lost in this desert where its identity is destroyed". <128>

As we have seen, Eckhart uses the concept of unity primarily in a philosophical way. The Godhead is unity; the Godhead has no form; there is no activity in the Godhead. This is evident from the quotation above. But Eckhart does not say that the mystical experience is psychologically characterized by nonactivity, unity or formlessness. Eckhart is speaking, it is true, of the soul's union with the Godhead, but he does not claim that the mystical experience is characterized by undifferentiated unity. Eckhart is speaking metaphysically, not psychologically. This is, I think, clear from the linguistic context.

There is yet another argument for regarding Stace's interpretation as unlikely. How can Eckhart experience undifferentiated unity when he experiences God? At least God exists then as an element of the experience. Stace's cognition theory allows, to be sure, that Eckhart's talk of God could represent a doctrinal interpretation and not describe a property of an experience. But a little later in the same sermon Eckhart says the following:

> Next the soul receives from the Godhead the eternal wisdom of the Father - knowledge and understanding of all things. <129>

It is evident from this, in my view, that the mystic gains knowledge of everything, and that this can hardly be an experience characterized by undifferentiated unity. Stace could perhaps defend himself by saying that the experience is paradoxical. It is both an experience of a void and a positive experience. But this paradox has been constructed by Stace himself and has no basis in the text. If we assume that the mystic does not experience undifferentiated unity, the paradox is solved.

Nor do the symbolic expressions "barren" and "desert" stand for properties of a mystical experience in my view. Eckhart writes "barren Godhead" and "desert of the Godhead". The symbols thus stand for the emptiness of the Godhead, if these expression should be interpreted to mean emptiness at all, and do not describe a mystical experience symbolically.

Stace's interpretation of Eckhart's utterance as a description of the dissolution of the ego is, in my opinion, also improbable. Eckhart is speaking from a philosophical point of view. When the soul reaches the Godhead, it must of course lose it identity completely as the Godhead is characterized by complete unity. There is nothing in the linguistic context that indicates that Eckhart is speaking in psychological terms.

In *The Teachings* Stace gives a quotation from the same sermon in support of his claim that Eckhart asserts that the experience is not characterized by the subject-object relationship:

> ... we are not wholly blessed, even though we are looking at divine truth; for while we are still looking at it, we are not in it. As long as a man has an object under consideration, he is not one with it. Where there is nothing but One, nothing but One is to be seen. Therefore, no man can see God

except he be blind, nor know him except through ignorance, nor understand him except through folly. <130>

According to my interpretation, however, the sentences in the passage function instructively and not descriptively. For the soul to achieve unity with the Godhead, all that is created has to be transcended. This is clear from the passage that comes directly after Stace's quotation:

> To this point, St. Augustine says: "No soul may come to God except it come to him apart from creature things and seek him without any image." That, too, is what Christ meant when he said: "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye and then thou shalt see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brother's eye!" This suggests that creatures are to be compared to beams in the soul's eye and that they hinder union with God because they are creaturely. Therefore, because even the soul is a creature, even it must first be cast out. Indeed, it must cast out even the saints and angels and even our blessed Lady, because these are all creatures!

> The soul should be independent and should not want anything and then it would attain godly stature by reason of likeness. <13l>

Eckhart does not say here that the experience is characterized psychologically by transcendence of the subject-object relationship, but that if the ego wishes to attain union with God then it should not consider created objects. Consequently, Eckhart is describing the way to mystical experiences and not their properties.

Stace claims that Eckhart has on several occasions described the mystical experience as being beyond time and space. Stace cites:

> It ranks so high that it communes with God face to face as he is. (It) ... is unconscious of yesterday or the day before and of tomorrow and the day after, for in eternity there is yesterday, nor any tomorrow, but only Now. <l32>

It is improbable that Eckhart would characterize the experience as beyond time and space here in the light of what has been said earlier. *The Apex of the* soul is, philosophically speaking, beyond time and already one with the Godhead. Eckhart does not say anything about the experience of God. That the talk of time and space is philosophical and not psychological is even more obvious from the next passage:

> Nothing hinders the soul's knowledge of God as much as time and space, for time and space are fragments, whereas God is one. And therefore if the soul is to know God, it must know Him above time and outside space. <133>

For the mystic to gain knowledge of God, he must go beyond time and space as the Godhead is beyond time and space. There is nothing in the text to support the view that Eckhart is describing properties of a mystical experience here.

Finally, Stace believes that Eckhart's experience is characterized by paradoxicality. He cites:

> ... the onefold One has neither a manner nor properties. <134>

Eckhart writes that God has no qualities. But God is also Goodness, Wisdom, Power, Knowledge, etc. Therefore, Stace thinks that a paradox arises. < 135 > Stace cites further:

> God acts. The Godhead does not. It has nothing to do and there is nothing going on in it ... The difference between God and the Godhead is the difference between action and nonaction. < 136>

> This divine ground is a unified stillness immoveable in itself. Yet from this immobility all things are moved and receive life. <137>

According to Stace, a paradox arises because God in Eckhart's view is both active and inactive. <138> But Eckhart does not say anything in these utterances about the mystical experience being characterized by paradoxicality but is speaking metaphysically. <139>

From my analysis I conclude that Stace has not shown that the mystical expressions in question should be interpreted both in psychological and philosophical terms. The mystical sentences in the passages cited function theophilosophically/instructively, not descriptively, and therefore do not allow identification of Eckhart's mystical experience, either logically or by a scientific method. Stace himself is aware that it can be difficult to identify Eckhart's experience from his utterances as he speaks in metaphysical terms, but Stace has not realized the implications of his discovery. He says that those who have studied Eckhart know that Eckhart is speaking from his own experience. <140> 1 am inclined to agree with Stace here. But it does not follow from the fact that a mystic has had mystical experiences that he is able to communicate this to others in such a way as to enable the identification of the experience.

Teresa de Cepeda Y Ahumada (1515-1582)

The only utterance of St Teresa of Avila for which Stace has given an exact, verifiable source < 141 > comes from her autobiography, *The Life of the Holy Mother Teresa of Jesus.* In the chapter which includes the quotation, Teresa is dealing with the final stage of the mystical way, *union.* Stace claims that Teresa relates that the experience is characterized by being real in contrast to being a hallucination. Thereby, Teresa is supposed to have described a non-content-related property of a mystical experience and the sentences are taken to function descriptively. Stace cites Teresa:

> I can only say that the soul feels close to God and that there abides within it such a certainty that it cannot possibly do other than believe. <142>

I cannot accept Stace's interpretation, however. Teresa does not say anything about the experience being characterized by being real. She does, on the other hand, say that she is certain that it was God's presence that she had experienced, which is something different. It becomes clear from the passage that immediately follows Stace's quotation that the word "certainty" refers to her belief that God was present in the experience and does not refer to the character of reality that the experience had:

> I could not cease believing that He was there, for it seemed almost certain that I had been conscious of His very presence. <W>

I therefore conclude that Stace has not shown that the sentence in question contains a description of a property of a mystical experience. Stace has, in other words, not succeeded in identifying a mystical experience by means of this utterance.

Juan de Yepes (1542-1591)

Stace uses five quotations of St John of the Cross to identify a mystical experience. All five come from the second book, Part 11, of *Ascent of Mount Carmel (The Dark Night of the Soul).* The first four quotations deal methods for attaining union with God. I have chosen to give only one of' here:

> ... the soul must be emptied of all these imagined forms, figures and images, and I remain in darkness with respect to these... < 144>

Stace interprets this sentence as being primarily instructive. St John of the Cross is saying that to attain union with God the mystic must empty consciousness of sensations, images, thoughts and acts of will.

<145> From this Stace draws the conclusion that if everything that is just apprehended by the consciousness has to disappear, unless the unconscious steps in, the experience attained is characterized by undifferentiated unity. Here Stace is guilty of drawing a wrong conclusion. The fact that St John of the Cross recommends the mystic to get rid of all "empirical content" does necessarily imply that undifferentiated unity will result. Moreover, we know that the experience contains something positive, namely what St John of Cross calls "God". Stace himself has admitted this. Stace's solution, as we have already seen earlier, is that the experience is paradoxical because it is characterized both by undifferentiated unity and by having a positive content. The paradox, however, is one of Stace's own construction and he has not shown that the paradox is borne out by the utterances of the mystics. If we assume that mystics do not experience undifferentiated unity, then the paradox is solved.

In *The Teachings of the* Mystics, Stace interprets the passage cited differently than in *Mysticism and Philosophy*. Stace maintains here that the mystical expression "darkness" is a symbol of undifferentiated unity. <146> W Trueman Dicken, who has specialized in Spanish mystics, does not hold the same view as Stace, and I am inclined to agree with him. In the context of t quotation, St John of the Cross speaks of methods for attaining union with God. According to Dicken, he maintains that the mystic must be deprived all worldly desires. First the mystic must be deprived of worldly things, then perception and intellect, as none of these can lead him to God. Here faith must come into being. Thirdly, even God is darkness to us as we cannot understand him as he is while we are still bound to this earthly life. The soul is filled with God at the same rate as it is emptied of things that are not God. According to John of the Cross, the soul must pass through three types of "dark stages" to attain union with God. Dicken says that St John of the Cross hereby wants to point out to his disciples, by means of symbols, the importance of riddin oneself of one's desires and of following Christ, a fundamental idea in Christian theology. <147> Dicken and Stace are thus agreed that the word "darkness" should be interpreted symbolically. However, there is nothing in the text or its context to support the idea that the concept of darkness stands for undifferentiated unity. Dicken's interpretation is therefore preferable. The mystical language, in other words, functions instructively and describes methods to be used at stages on the way to attaining union with God. Consequently, St John of the Cross does not describe properties of the mystical experience.

In the fifth quotation, St John of the Cross describes, according to Stace, the void of the mystical experience: <148>

> It feels as though it had been placed into a profound and vast solitude, into an immense and boundless desert .... <149>

An analysis of the linguistic context of the above quotation shows, however, that St John of the Cross does not use the mystical word "desert" as a symbol of a void. In Chapter XVII, from which the passage comes, St John of the Cross is speaking about what it meant by saying that the mystical "wisdom" is "secret". He gives three reasons. Stace's quotation is included in St John's exposition of the third reason, which is that the mystical "wisdom" is described as "secret" because it has the property of hiding the soul within it. The soul understands then the gap that exists between itself and created beings. This is followed by the utterance that Stace cites, that is, that the soul feels as *though* it had been placed in a profound solitude, in a boundless desert. After Stace's quotation come the words 'inaccessible to any human being". In other words, St John of the Cross is speaking in philosophical terms about the soul feeling as though it were in a complete desert. He does not say that he has experienced a void. Consequently. there is nothing in the text or its context that indicates that the word "desert" here could be translated into the literal statement that the experience was characterized by a void. Furthermore, the same reason put forward against the mystical experience being without content may be put forward here against the proposition that the experience concerns a void (see above).

In support of his interpretation of the word "desert", Stace also states that St John of the Cross uses the word in the same way as Eckhart. < 150> But, as we have already seen, it is difficult to interpret Eckhart's utterance in the way that Stace suggests. Moreover, identification of a mystical experience based on

comparisons with the utterances of other mystics is a method that is hard to defend, something that I have already explained in the introduction to this chapter.

There are other arguments, however, for dismissing Stace's interpretation of the quotation in question. In the passage immediately after Stace's quotation, St John of the Cross writes the following about the secrecy of the mystical "wisdom":

> ...it acts as a guide in leading the soul to the perfections of the union with God <15l>

St John of the Cross does not, in other words, speak about the mystical experience when using the word "desert". He speaks of stages that the mystics goes through on the way there.

Finally, Stace has used a translation that we realize today, and it must have been so in Stace's time as well, is not so close to the original text as that done by E Allison Peers. It is interesting to note that Allison Peers translation of the particular passage is as follows:

> .... it considers itself as having been placed in a most profound and vast retreat.. <152

According to this translation, St John of the Cross does not speak at all about experiencing anything but of considering something. This supports the interpretation that the mystical sentence is not used descriptively here but theophilosophically and/or instructively.

From my analysis I therefore conclude that none of the sentences that Stace has cited from the writings of St John of the Cross can be interpreted functioning descriptively. Stace has, in other words, not shown that we can identify a mystical experience with the help of these utterances of St John o the Cross.

4.2.3. Texts in Which Sentences do not Function Descriptively if the Utterances about Ineffability are Considered

In this group we find utterances in which the sentences actually appear to function descriptively but are shown not to do so after further analysis on the basis of the mystic's utterance about the ineffability of the mystical experience. Instead, the sentences function analogously or figuratively. This group includes utterances from Alfred Tennyson, John Addington Symonds, Martin Buber and Arthur Koestler.

Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

Stace cites the following excerpt from a letter by Tennyson to Benjamin Paul Blood, May 7, 1874:

> A kind of waking trance - this for lack of a better word - I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been quite alone .... 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 was not a confused state but the clearest, the surest of the sure, 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. <1.53>

According to Stace, the mystical sentences in the passage primarily function descriptively. Tennyson is describing how the ego is dissolved during the mystical experience and disappears into what he calls "boundless being", a concept that Stace believes to mean the same as infinite being, which describes a type of experience that, for example, Christian mystics have had and which, according to Stace, they have interpreted as union with God.

Stace also believes that we can understand from the passage that Tennyson's experience is characterized by paradoxicality. The ego is dissolved at the same time as it is Tennyson himself who experiences it. That Tennyson finds this confusing is expressed, Stace says, by the words "if so it were". <154>

Tennyson relates in his letter to Blood that he has had a mystical experience after repeating his own name over and over again. There is no doubt that the language in this context is used for trying to convey some kind of information. Stace interprets the sentences descriptively, as we have seen. But I think that the sentences should not be interpreted as functioning descriptively but analogously. Before I explain the reasons for such an interpretation, I should first like to cite what immediately follows Stace's quotation, a section that Stace has probably not had access to. Tennyson writes:

I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words? But in a moment when I come back into my normal condition of "sanity" I am ready to fight for "Mein liebes Ich", and hold that it will last for Aeons of Aeons. <l55>

It is evident from the two passages that Tennyson first attempts to describe the experience, then maintains that the experience is impossible to describe, then attempts to describe it again nevertheless, but finally concludes that the experience is absolutely impossible to describe. In my view, this struggle cannot be explained in the way Stace suggests, that is, that Tennyson has become confused when he notices that he has expressed himself paradoxically and therefore proposes that the experience is ineffable. Firstly, Tennyson does not give the impression of being confused. I cannot find any support for this in the text. When Tennyson says, in the quotation in question, "the loss of personality (if so it were)", my contextual interpretation is that Tennyson was uncertain whether his personality had dissolved. I cannot find any evidence in the text that confirms the idea that Tennyson was confused.

My contextual interpretation is supported by the following two factors. Tennyson does not describe his experience with the help of direct, but with indirect, terms. He writes "seems to dissolve". Tennyson himself, then, did not mean the sentences to be interpreted descriptively. Why should he describe the experience and then maintain that the experience is ineffable? As Tennyson was an intellectual, and as he concludes by speaking of the ineffability of the experience, it is difficult to claim that Tennyson was not aware of the difference between what he did and what he said he did. I therefore suggest the following interpretation: Tennyson wishes to say something about his experience. He therefore attempts to delimit it by speaking of it in an indirect way. The experience is, to be sure, "utterly beyond words", but it can be describe stating what it is similar to. To show that the properties he states are analogous and not literal, he uses the word of warning "seemed".

If Tennyson's utterances are interpreted in this way, they are consistent therefore believe that this interpretation is preferable to Stace's, especially since we have been able to establish that Stace's explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability cannot be applied to Tennyson's utterances. Stace have, in other words, not shown that the mystical sentences concerned function descriptively. Nor has he shown that the word "ineffable" should be interpreted in terms of psychological ineffability. Therefore, he has not shown that the sentences can be used as a basis for identifying a mystical experience.

John Addington Symonds (1840-1893)

Stace cites Symonds:

> Suddenly at church or in company, or when I was reading ... I felt the approach of the mood. Irresistably it took possession of my mind and will, lasted what seemed an eternity and disappeared in a series of rapid sensations which resembled the awakening from an anaesthetic influence. One reason why I disliked this kind of trance was that I could not describe it to myself. I cannot even now find words to render it intelligible. It consisted in a gradual but swiftly progressive obliteration of space, time, sensation, and the multifarious

> factors of experience which seem to qualify what we are pleased to call our Self. In
> proportion as these conditions of ordinary consciousness were subtracted, the sense of an
> underlying or essential consciousness acquired intensity. At last nothing remained but a
> pure, absolute, abstract Self. The universe became without form and void of content. But
> Self persisted, formidable in its vivid keenness... The return to ordinary condition of
> sentient existence began by my first recovering the power of touch, and then by the gradual
> though rapid influx of familiar impressions and diurnal interests ... Though the riddle of
> what is meant by life remained unsolved 1 was thankful for this return from the abyss …
> This trance recurred with diminishing frequency until I reached the age of twenty-eight…
> Often 1 have asked myself, on waking from that formless state of denuded, keenly sentient
> being: Which is the reality - the trance of fiery, vacant, apprehensive, sceptical Self ...
> these surrounding phenomena? <156>

Stace claims that Symonds uses the mystical expression "void", "vacant "formless state of denuded ...
being", "underlying or essential consciousness" and "pure, absolute, abstract self" literally. They all express
what Stace, with the Upanishads, calls "pure consciousness". <157> Stace asserts that Symonds has
experienced undifferentiated unity and that the experience was paradoxical because of having both a positive
and a negative content and being conscious without being consciousness of an object. <158>

Let us see how Symonds uses the language. In his autobiography, which where Stace took the quotation
from, Symonds tells us about what he call "trances", something that he experienced sporadically up to the
age of 28. I do not doubt that the sentences actually function descriptively here. Stace would thereby have
found an example of mystical sentences with whose help a mystical experience can be identified by a
scientific method. But when Symonds uses the words "formless" and "vacancy", it is done simultaneously
with words that do not indicate pure *consciousness,* namely "keenly sentient" and "fiery, apprehensive,
sceptical self". I do not understand how the expressions "pure, absolute, abstract self" or "underlying or
essential consciousness" imply pure *consciousness.* It does not follow that if something is abstract or
absolute, it is void of content. Nor is something that is pure *consciousness* necessarily void of content.
Moreover, J A Symonds was a writer and an intellectual. I find it difficult to understand why Symonds, both
before and after the description, should emphasize that the experience is ineffable if it could be described as
void of content, which Stace asserts that Symonds does. Symonds concludes the description as follows:

> I find it impossible, however, to render an adequate account of the initiation. Nor can I properly
> describe the permanent effect produced upon my mind by the contrast between this exceptional
> condition of my consciousness and the daily experiences - physical, moral, intellectual, emotional,
> practical - with which I compared it. Like other psychical states, it lies beyond the province of
> language. <159>

Why should Symonds be guilty of such an error? Is it not more reasonable to suppose that Symonds means
that he is trying to compare the experience with something similar, that is, to indicate analogous properties,
than to interpret him as first pointing out that the experience is ineffable, then describing it in literal terms
and finally once more pointing out that the experience is ineffable? In my view, Symonds utterances are
consistent if we assume that he is trying to describe the properties of the experience by comparing it with
other forms of experience. In fact, he says himself that this is what he is trying to do. The experience is thus
ineffable in the sense that the language does not supply the concepts with whose help the experience can be
described. Symonds says that the experience cannot be described "adequately". But he does not say that it is
logically impossible.

But what does Symonds mean by stating that "like other psychical states, it lies beyond the province of
language"? Doesn't this mean that Symonds supports Smart's theory that all experiences are ineffable in the
sense that we cannot describe them completely? It is difficult not to draw that conclusion. The theories that I
presented in the previous chapter do not, as indicated, exclude one another. I therefore believe that Symonds
uses both meanings. The experience is ineffable because all experiences are in a sense ineffable. But the

experience is also ineffable because the language does not supply the concepts that are necessary for describing the experience in question. The fact that the experience ineffable even to Symonds supports the view that Symonds cannot only accept the first theory. In Smart's theory the sender has no difficulty in determining the properties of the experience himself. The difficulty lies in describing the experience completely to others.

Stace's solution, that the experience is characterized by paradoxicality and is therefore said to be ineffable, is not tenable in Symonds case. The first paradox consists, according to Stace, in the experience being characterized by pure consciousness at the same as being a positive experience. Symonds does not write, however, either in the passage Stace selected or anywhere else <160>, anything that indicates that he regards the experience as being paradoxical in character. It is Stace that draws that conclusion without finding any support in Symonds utterances. Nor can we conclude that the experience is paradoxical because it is unintelligible.

The other paradox, that the experience is characterized by being conscious without being consciousness of an object, has also been constructed by Stace. The paradox arises because the concept of experience presupposes that a subject experiences an object, which does not happen in a mystical experience. This is not a paradox in my view, however. Because we have defined the concept of experience in such a way as to exclude the occurrence of certain types of experience, we cannot conclude that these non-ordinary "experiences" are paradoxical in character. The paradoxes arise on a semantic level but do not reflect the character of the "experience". As I have already said, it is not evident from Symonds utterances that he believes that the experience is paradoxical.

Finally, a comment on Stace's claim that the experience is characterized by undifferentiated unity. According to my interpretation of Symonds, it is difficult to identify the experience as characterized by undifferentiated unity. Furthermore, nowhere does Symonds say anything about an experience of unity, something that Stace himself had admitted barely 20 pages previously. <16l>

For the reason stated, I believe that my interpretation of how Symonds uses the expression "ineffable" is preferable to Stace's. The conclusion I draw from my analysis is therefore that Stace has not shown that the mystical sentences in the quotation concerned function descriptively. Consequently, Stace cannot base his theory of the possibility of identifying a mystical experience by a scientific method upon Symonds utterance.

Martin Buber (1878-1965)

Stace cites:

> Now from my own unforgettable experience I know well that there is a state in which the bonds of the personal nature of life seem to have fallen away and we experience an undivided unity. But I do not know - what the soul willingly imagines and is indeed bound to imagine (mine too once did it) - that in this I had attained to a union with the primal being or the Godhead .... In the honest and sober account of the responsible understanding this unity is nothing but the unity of this soul of mine, whose "ground" I have reached, so much so... that my spirit has no choice but to understand it as the groundless. But the basic unity of my own soul is certainly beyond the reach of all the multiplicity it has hitherto received from life, though not in the least beyond individuation, or the multiplicity of all the souls in the world of which it is one - existing but once, single, unique, irreducible, this creaturely one: one of the human souls and not "the soul of the All". <162>

Stace implicitly asserts that Buber is using the sentences descriptively. According to Stace, Buber describes the experience as characterized by undifferentiated, distinctionless unity, beyond multiplicity, and finally the dissolution of the ego, the latter being expressed in the sentence "a state in which the bonds of the personal nature.... seem to have fallen away". <163>

I am inclined to agree with Stace. He has found a mystical utterance in which the sentences partly function descriptively. But, as mentioned before, Stace claims that, to be able to assert that Buber is really describing a mystical experience in the passage cited, we must show that he uses the word "ineffable" in such a way that the result of the examination of the semantic functions of the mystical sentences should not be doubted. Unfortunately, Stace has not shown that Buber has used the word "ineffable" in the way Stace suggests. So Stace has not shown that Buber is actually describing properties of the mystical experience literally in the utterance in question.

I have chosen not to conclude the analysis here, however. As Buber's utterance is the first example where I can accept that the sentences function descriptively, and as such a result would have a strong bearing on the discussion of the problem of identification, I have chosen to attempt to find out whether Stace is right by examining Buber's use of the word "ineffable". I have therefore studied Buber's works. The result of this study is briefly as follows. Buber has dealt with the phenomenon of ineffability especially in the introduction to *Ekstatische Konfessionen* (1909). Buber writes:

> Er sagt die Gestalten und Klange, und merkt, das er nicht das Erlebnis sagt, nicht den Grund, nicht die Einheit, und möchte innehalten und kann nicht, und fühlt die Unsagbarkeit wie ein Tor mit sieben Sch1össern, an dem er rüittelt, und weiss, dass es nie aufgehen wird, und darf nicht ablassen. Denn das Wort brennt in ihm. <164>
> Und er redet, redet, er kann nicht schweigen, es treibt ihn die Flamme im Worte, er weiss dass er es nicht sagen kann, und versucht es doch immer und immer, bis seine Seele erschöpft ist zum Tode und das Wort ihn verlasst. <165>

What does Buber mean then by the word "ineffable"? He writes:

> Seine Einheit ist nicht relativ, nicht vom Anderen begrenzt, sie ist grenzenlos, denn sie ist die Einheit von Ich und Welt. Seine Einheit ist Einsarnkeit, die absolute Einsarnkeit: die Einsarnkeit dessen, der ohne Grenzen ist. Er hat das Andere, die Anderen mit in sich, in seiner Einheit: als Welt; aber er hat ausser sich keine Anderen mehr, er hat keine Gemeinschaft mehr mit ihnen, keine Gemeinsarnkeit. Die Sprache aber ist eine Funktion der Gemeinschaft und sie kann nichts als Gerneinsarnkeit sagen. Auch das Persönlichste muss sie irgendwie in das gemeinsame Erlebnis der Menschen überführen, irgendwie aus diesem zurechtmischen, urn es auszusprechen. Die Ekstase steht jenseits das gemeinsame Erlebnisses. Sie ist die Einheit, sie ist die Einsarnkeit, sie ist die Einzigkeit: die nicht ilberfiihrt werden kann. Sie ist der Abgrund, den kein Senkblei misst: das Unsagbare. <166>
> Sobald sie sprachen, sobald sie - wie es der Rede Vorspiel zu sein pflegt - zu sich sprachen waren sie schon an der Kette, in den Grenzen; der Unbegrenzte spricht auch nicht zu sich in sich, weil auch in ihm keine Grenzen sind: keine Vielheit, keine Zweiheit, kein Du irr Ich mehr. Sobald sie reden, sind sie schon der Sprache verfallen, die allem gewachsen ist nur nicht dem Grund des Erlebens, der Einheit. Sobald sie sagen, sagen sie schon das Andere. <167>

According to Buber, it is the nature of the experience that causes it to be regarded as ineffable. The experience is not only logically ineffable during the experience itself, as Stace claims, but also afterwards. Language cannot describe an experience that is not divisible. But as we have already seen in the second quotation above, the word "Einheit" is not adequate either: "Er sagt ... nicht die Einheit". But to be able to talk about the experience, we are forced to label it. The mystical sentences do not therefore function descriptively, but the words are used in a figurative sense and cannot be translated into literal expressions:

> Ja, es ist wahr: der Ekstatiker kann das Unsagbare nicht sagen. Er sagt das Andere, Bilder, Träume, Gesichte; die Einheit nicht. Er redet, er muss reden, weil das Wort in ihm brennt. <168>

The conclusion I draw from my analysis is that when Buber is speaking of his mystical experience he is not using the sentences descriptively. He does not think that we can use words literally about this type of

experience. We should therefore interpret the sentences in question in a figurative sense. < 169> I find it difficult to imagine that such a great thinker as Buber would be unaware that he actually uses the sentences concerned descriptively. His examination of the question of ineffability also makes Stace's interpretation of that particular passage improbable. Consequently, it is very difficult to identify properties of mystical experience by a scientific method using Buber's utterance as a basis.

Arthur Koestler (1905-1984)

In the second half of his autobiography < 170>, the well-known work *Invisible Writing (1954),* Koestler writes about the mystical experiences that he had in a condemned cell in Spain in *1937,* and Stace cites:

> Then 1 was floating on my back in a river of peace under bridges of silence. It came from nowhere and flowed nowhere. Then there was no river and no I. The I had ceased to exist ... When I say "the I had ceased to exist" I refer to a concrete experience... The I ceases to exist because it has, by a kind of mental osmosis, established communication with, and been dissolved in, the universal pool. It is this process of dissolution and limitless expansion which is sensed as the "oceanic" feeling, as the draining of all tension, the absolute I catharsis, the peace that passeth all understanding. <17l>

Stace interprets Koestler's utterance to mean that his experience is characterized by infinity, limitlessness and paradoxicality. *<172>*

Koestler himself has mentioned some semantic issues. He says that he has read "The Meaning of Meaning" <173> and studied logical empiricism. He says that he strives after formal precision and hates exalting phrases. But as far as the mystical experience was concerned, Koestler felt nevertheless forced to describe them in the way he did. < 174> Koestler was, in other words, aware of the relationship between experiences, on the one hand, and the possibility of describing them, on the other.

It is interesting to note what Stace has left out after the sentence "The I ceased to exist". One finds this, among other things:

> Yet, 'mystical' experiences, as we dubiously call them, are not nebulous, vague or maudlin - they only become so when we debase them by verbalization. However, to communicate what is incommunicable by its nature, one must somehow put it into words, and so one moves in a vicious circle. <175>

In the other section that was left out, we find the following:

> What distinguishes this type of experience from the emotional entrancement of music, landscapes or love is that the former has a definitely intellectual, or rather noumenal, content. It is meaningful, though not in verbal terms. <176>

Koestler maintains that the mystical experience is ineffable. The phrase "incommunicable by its nature" indicates that Koestler advocates the theory of logical ineffability, which is also even more evident in the long quotation below:

> The 'hours by the window'< 177 >, which had started with the rational reflection that finite statements about the infinite were possible - and which in fact represented a series of such statements on a non- rational level - had filled me with a direct certainty that a higher order of reality existed, and that it alone invested existence with meaning. I came to call it later on 'the reality of the third order'. The narrow world of sensory perception constituted the first order; this perceptual world was enveloped by the conceptual world which contained phenomena not directly perceivable, such as

gravitation, electromagnetic fields, and curved space. The second order of reality filled in the gaps and gave meaning to the absurd patchiness of the sensory world.

In the same manner, the third order of reality enveloped, interpenetrated, and gave
meaning to the second. It contained 'occult' phenomena which could not be apprehended or explained either on the sensory or on the conceptual level, and yet occasionally invade them like spiritual meteors piercing the primitive's vaulted sky. Just as the conceptual order showed up the illusions and distortions of the senses, so the 'third 'order disclose that time, space and causality, that the isolation, separateness and spatio-temporal limitations of the self were merely optical illusions on the next higher level. <178>

Koestler claims that the mystical experience is beyond concepts and that it i ineffable by reason of its nature. He also explains how the mystical sentence should be interpreted if they should not be interpreted as functioning descriptively. After the sentence "It is meaningful, though not in verbal terms", which have been cited above. Koestler writes:

Verbal transcriptions that come nearest to it are: the unity and interlocking of everything that exists, an interdependence like that of gravitational fields or communicating vessels that ceases to exist because .. <179>

Koestler emphasizes that his mystical sentences do not function descriptively., but analogously; he calls them "transcriptions". Another indication that Koestler's utterances do not function descriptively is to be found in the first half of his autobiography, *Arrow in the Blue,* in which, after describing his experiences, he says:

In the following sections the contemplative trend will play a quantitatively smaller part than the active trend. This is unavoidable because the "oceanic experience" to a large extent eludes verbal communication, and attempts to convey it (unless one has the gift of poetic expression, which I have not) tend to fall flat or take a maudlin turn. <180>

Stace asserts that Koestler's utterances contain paradoxes and that Koestler, after discovering this, was confused and believed that the mystical experience is ineffable. In support of the idea that Koestler is expressing himself paradoxically, Stace cites the following passage:

The reflections I have put down so far were still on the rational level .... But as we proceed to others in an inward direction, they will become more embarrassing and more difficult to put into words. They will also *contradict* each other - for, we are moving here through strata that are held together by the cement of *contradiction.* (Stace's italics) <18l>

Stace believes that we can find an example of a paradox in Koestler's first utterance, namely that the ego disappears at the same time as somebody is experiencing this. <182> But I cannot find anything in the text that implies that Koestler was confused. Nor has Stace shown where we can find utterances that would support this. As we have seen, Koestler thinks that in his case the mystical sentences function analogously and not descriptively. I have not found anything that would indicate that Koestler is inconsistent on this point. The mystical experience cannot therefore be characterized by paradoxicality. The reference to the dissolution of "I" is an example of a "transcription" and not a literal description of the experience. A paradox, in Stace's sense, arises only if we interpret the sentences as functioning descriptively.

I conclude from my analysis that Koestler is consistent when he speaks of his mystical experiences, while claiming them to be ineffable. The mystical experience is logically ineffable, so that attempts to speak of it take place in analogous terms. If my analyses are correct, Stace has not shown that the mystical sentences function descriptively in Koestler's case and, consequently, cannot use them to identify a mystical experience. <183>

4.2.4. Texts in Which the Sentences Function descriptively but Only with Regard to Non-Content-Related Properties

In this last group we find utterances about which Stace is correct in saying that the sentences function descriptively, that is, are used to describe mystical experiences. However, closer analysis shows that the mystic confines himself to speaking of the non-content-related properties of the experience, while the content-related ones are not mentioned, or cannot be mentioned because the experience is ineffable.

The utterances of Jan van Ruysbroeck belong to this group.

Jan van Ruysbroeck (1293-1381)

Stace claims that we can identify Ruysbroeck's mystical experience by analysing ten of his utterances. <184> The first one comes from *The Sparkling Stone* and is as follows:

> The God-seeing man ... can always enter, naked and unencumbered with images, into the inmost part of his spirit. There he finds revealed an Eternal Light.... It (his spirit) is undifferentiated and without distinction, and therefore it feels nothing but the unity. <185>

According to Stace, this utterance is an example of a description of a mystical experience that is almost devoid of a doctrinal interpretation. The experience is characterized by being without mental images, without multiplicity and by being undifferentiated and without distinction. Thus the mystic does not experience anything but unity, defined according to Stace as the mystic's ego. The experience is also paradoxical by being without content at the same time as being an experience of 'Eternal Light'. <186>

In the next quotation, from "*The Book of Supreme Truth*", Ruysbroeck, Stace claims, finds unity in the thought-bare, imageless experience, interpreting it himself as something divine: <187>

> Such enlightened men are, with a free spirit, lifted above reason into a bare and imageless vision, wherein lives the eternal indrawing summons of the Divine Unity; and with an imageless and bare understanding, they ... reach the summit of their spirits. There, their bare understanding is drenched through by the Eternal Brightness. <1.88>

Let us leave the other quotations for the moment. Stace claims that the sentences in Ruysbroeck's utterances function descriptively and that he is describing what Stace calls an experience of "undifferentiated unity". But I do not agree with Stace. Most of the sentences in all of the passages selected by Stace function theophilosophically and not descriptively. The reason why my interpretation differs from that of Stace is that I have interpreted the concept of *unity* in a different way to him, and that I believe my interpretation agrees better with the linguistic context. What did Ruysbroeck mean by the concept of unity? To explain this concept it is necessary to give a brief account of Ruysbroeck's view of God and the mystical life. Here I have consulted Evelyn Underhill, Rufus M Jones, William Ralph Inge, Ninian Smart, Eric Colledge and Ray C Petry.

According to Ruysbroeck, God is Absolute One, in whom the antitheses Eternity and Time, Being and Become are dissolved. He is both static and dynamic, transcendent and immanent, impersonal and personal, undifferentiated and differentiated, Eternal Rest and Eternal Work, the Untouched Mover and the Movement itself. God has many names but his nature is one. <189> He is the absolute Reality, which seems to man to be Eternal Rest, the Deep Silence of the Godhead, the Abyss and Dim Silence, is something that we can "taste" but never gain knowledge of. The static and absolute aspect of Reality is the calm and glorified Unity of the Godhead, which Ruysbroeck regards as being both beyond and in the Trinity. <190> Man is created for unity with God. In fact, man is already united with God through his soul, but it is a question of experiencing union with Him during one's daily life as well. The soul, according to Ruysbroeck, has three properties, which are equivalent to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit of the Trinity. The first property,

Naked being, means that the soul is united with the Father. The second property, *higher understanding,* means that we can comprehend divine things and receive God's son, the Eternal Truth. The third property Ruysbroeck calls *the spark* and it stands for the natural tendency of the soul to wish to turn inwards towards its Source. Here man receives the Holy Spirit, God's immanent and dynamic aspect. <19l>

The universe has three levels of order: Becoming, Being and God. Ruysbroeck's description of the three stages the mystic goes through is connected with these three levels of reality. According to Ruysbroeck, man is a unity consisting of a body, a soul and a "personality", and in Ruysbroeck the development of these three parts is also linked up with the three stages. Finally, the traditional tripartite division of spiritual powers in the senses, the intellect and the spirit also has its counterpart in the mystical stages: Active Life, Interior Life and Superessential Life. < 192>

The first stage, Active Life, is characterized by good works in "the world". Here the mystic's will and sense undergo purification. He comes in contact with God's will through contact with other people. When God and the soul meet each other at this stage, love ensues. All the spiritual instruments of the mystic attend to God. Man has now been united with God "through means" <193>, that is through good works and the sacrament. Here man develops through his senses, that is through the body. <194> This stage corresponds to Becoming on the ontological scale and may be depicted as a spiritual awakening. <195> Thus, Ruysbroeck already uses the concept of unity when describing the lowest stage, not, as we have seen, in a psychological sense but in a metaphysical one.

In the next stage, Interior Life, the mystic develops by means of his rational and spiritual powers, that is through the soul. <196> Now the mystic's consciousness gains more contact with God. He purifies his intellect by developing his will and his love. He turns from the distractions of the world while Active Life is still in progress. <197> The method in this stage is to concentrate the consciousness on emptying it of everything that concerns the world of phenomena. <198> When the mystic has been through the second stage, he has the right "attitude" to the unity which is the inconceivable, unity with God. The mystic is unable to do anything more by himself. His being has been joined, by the grace of God, to God's being, a relationship that bears a faint resemblance to that between the persons in the Trinity. < 199 > Consequently, Ruysbroeck uses the concept of unity in the second stage, too, but this time it stands for spiritual unity, which expresses iself through right thoughts and right visions. <200>

The second stage corresponds to Being on the ontological scale and here contact with God takes place "without means". <20l> However, there is yet another stage on the mystical way, Superessential Life, a stage that develops through the co-operation of corporal and spiritual powers. <202> Just as there is a unity, namely the unity of the Godhead, behind the three divine persons, there is, according to Ruysbroeck, something more than Being behind Being. Man has potential contact with this source and can experience this sphere of reality. The mystic then experiences God as Eternal Rest and also parts of His love pouring out in the creation. The last stage is a synthetic unity of contemplation and action, of Being and Becoming. The mystic experiences unity with God irrespective of whether he spends his time in contemplation or takes an active part in the world. <203> In *The Seven Degrees of Love,* Ruysbroeck writes the following:

> Hence, to enter into restful fruition and come forth again in good works, and to remain even one with God - this is the thing that I would say. Even as we open our fleshly eyes, to see and shut them again so quickly that we do not even feel it, thus we die into God, we live of God, and remain even one with God. Therefore we must come forth in the activities of the sense-life, and again re-enter in love and cling to God in order that we may ever remain on with Him without change. <204>

To sum up, one can say that in Active Life the mystic is united with God, unity that occurs through means. In Interior Life unity takes place without means and in Superessential Life without distinction between the exterior and the interior. <205> The three stages in the mystic's development correspond to the three spiritual powers of man and the three levels of reality.

From the above presentation of how Ruysbroeck, according to several interpreters, uses the concept of unity, it is clear that this concept is used in a metaphysical sense and not in a psychological one. There is nothing to indicate that Ruysbroeck uses the words "union" or "unity" as psychological terms.

Let us now investigate the selection of texts that Stace cites in support of his identification theory. Stace is aware that Ruysbroeck describes different stages of the mystical way, but Stace does not take this into account when interpreting the mystical sentences. <206>

The first quotation is taken from Chapter III *of The Sparkling Stone.* In this chapter Ruysbroeck says that the mystic can become "god-seeing", that he attains the last stage in mystical development, on three conditions. The first condition is that the mystic should experience how his ultimate foundation is, divine, the second that the mystic should use the "wayless" method to attain unity with God. The third condition is that God's eternal love should flow into the mystic and remain there permanently. <207> Stace's quotations concern the second and third conditions. In this context Ruysbroeck says that the mystic must empty his consciousness of images, thoughts and awareness of the ego for God to be able to flow into his soul. This is said in the first two sentences in Stace's quotation. Stace could perhaps have agreed with me here, as it is in the last sentence that he believes that a mystical experience can be identified. But between the second and third sentence there is a section of almost a page. In this Ruysbroeck speaks of how the soul experiences an eternal fire of Love that draws the mystic into God's Unity. In this connection, Ruysbroeck writes the following, just before and just after Stace's quotation:

> ... and it feels itself ever more and more to be burnt up in love, for it is drawn and transformed into the Unity of God, where the spirit burns in love. If it observes itself, it finds a distinction and an otherness between itself and God; but where it is burnt up it is undifferentiated and without distinction, and therefore it feels nothing but unity; for the flame of Love of God consumes and devours all that it can enfold in its Self. <208>

In my view, it is obvious that Ruysbroeck is using the concept Unity of God in a philosophical, not a psychological, sense here. That the word "undifferentiated" should mean that the consciousness is void of content is contradicted by the fact that the soul is burning with the fire of love and that the mystic is experiencing Eternal Light. The consciousness must therefore have some content. The expression "the fire of Love" cannot symbolize a void, but the opposite, if anything. It is true that Stace is aware that the experience has a positive content, expressed by the phrase "Eternal Light", but Stace interprets this as one of the two elements in a paradox. However, Stace himself has constructed this paradox. Ruysbroeck does not say anything about this, and with Ruysbroeck's theology in mind I prefer not to interpret Ruysbroeck's utterances as being paradoxical. If Ruysbroeck does not experience undifferentiated unity, the paradox disappears. Nor, in my view, is Stace's interpretation supported either in the linguistic context or in Ruysbroeck's theology.

It is also evident in *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage* that Ruysbroeck does not experience undifferentiated unity. There he describes what he experiences in a figurative sense:

> The most high Nature of the Godhead may thus be perceived and beheld: how it is Simplicity and Onefoldness, inaccessible Height and Bottomless Depth, incomprehensible Breadth and eternal Length, a dark Silence, a wild Desert, the Rest of all saints in the Unity, and a common Fruition of Himself and of all saints in Eternity. And many other marvels may be seen in the abysmal Sea of the Godhead; and though, because of the grossness of the senses to which they must be shown from without, we must use sensible images, yet, in truth, these things are perceived and beheld from within, as an abysmal and unconditioned Good. But if they must be shown from without, it must be done by means of diverse similitudes and images, according to the enlightenment of the reason of him who shapes and shows them. <209>

I find it difficult to interpret this passage to mean that Ruysbroeck has experienced a void or something undifferentiated.

If we return to the original quotation, it is obvious, in my opinion, that there is no difference, philosophically speaking, between the soul and God in the mystical experience. Ruysbroeck experiences unity with God because the fire of Love, which is God's fire, devours everything. Ruysbroeck does not say what this union with God feels like. We may possibly draw the conclusion that Ruysbroeck has had a very strong feeling during the mystical experience, expressed by the mystical phrase "eternal fire of Love", but the phrase cannot be interpreted literally. First of all, "eternal" refers to a characteristic of God. Secondly, the phrase "fire of love" is, of course, meant as a symbol. Love does not burn literally. In the following passage, Ruysbroeck himself says that these words are not meant literally but figuratively:

> Behold! by each of these images, I show forth to God-seeing men their being and their exercise, but none else can understand them. <210>

Stace also claims that in the passage in question Ruysbroeck is describing the experience as without images and without multiplicity. As far as the latter is concerned, Stace has not referred to anything in the text to support it. The phrases "unencumbered with images" and "naked" describe, according to Stace, the image-less aspect of the experience. But it is evident from the linguistic context that Ruysbroeck is writing here about the method for achieving mystical experiences. In the first section that was omitted, Ruysbroeck in fact writes the following:

> ... the God-seeing man who has forsaken self and all things, and does not feel himself drawn away because he no longer possesses anything as his own, but stands empty of all, he can always enter, naked and unencumbered ... <21l>

So the mystic is untroubled by mental images and can therefore enter into the mystical experience. Ruysbroeck does not say that the experience is characterized by lack of images. Thus it is not likely that the word "naked" symbolizes lack of images, nor has Stace shown that this is the case.

As far as the second quotation is concerned, however, I am inclined to agree with Stace that Ruysbroeck describes the mystical experience as lacking in mental images and thoughts. Stace would thereby have found two non-content-related properties of the mystical experience. To be able to accept Stace's interpretation definitively in this case, however, his explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability must be regarded as preferable. I shall therefore return to this question later.

On the other hand, I cannot, of course, accept Stace's interpretation of the quotation concerned in other respects. On the basis of his interpretation of the first quotation, Stace concludes that Ruysbroeck has experienced unity, interpreted by Ruysbroeck as Divine Unity. Thus Stace admits that Ruysbroeck uses the expression "Divine Unity" in a philosophical, and not in a psychological, sense. As I prefer to interpret the first quotation differently, I cannot accept Stace's interpretation of the second quotation. To be able to interpret the mystical expression "Divine Unity" as a doctrinal interpretation of undifferentiated unity, Stace has to demonstrate this. He has not shown, however, that the words in the first passage function literally.

The third utterance of Ruysbroeck reads:

> There follows the union without distinction. Enlightened men have found within themselves an essential contemplation which is above reason and beyond reason, and a fruitive tendency which pierces through every condition and all being, and in which they immerse themselves in a wayless abyss of fathomless beatitude where the Trinity of the Divine Persons possess their nature in the essential unity. Behold this beatitude is so onefold and so wayless that in it every ... creaturely distinction ceases and passes away.... There all light is turned to darkness; there the three Persons

give place to the essential unity and abide without distinction ... For that beatific state ... is so simple and so onefold that neither Father, nor Son, nor Holy Ghost is distinct according to Persons. <212>

This quotation comes from *The Book of Supreme Truth.* Stace has not cited Ruysbroeck correctly in *Mysticism and Philosophy.* Among other things, he has not given certain words with the capital letters of the original, for instance "Unity". One can therefore be led to believe that these words do not stand for ontological entities. But let us disregard this. According to Stace, the sentences in the utterance function descriptively until Ruysbroeck begins speaking of the Trinity. Ruysbroeck describes the experience as characterized by undifferentiated, distinctionless unity. According to Stace, the symbol *abyss* stands for experience of the infinite. The word "darkness" is a symbol of the unity that lacks all distinctions <213> and probably refers, says Stace, to the parallel that all visual distinctions disappear in the dark. <214> "Wayless" means distinctionless, as a way marks a distinction in space. "Onefold" expresses the absence of duality or of distinctions. That which is distinctionless in the experience and its lack of multiplicity are also expressed, according to Stace, by the phrase "every creaturely distinction ceases and passes away". <215>

In the chapter in which the quotation is included, Ruysbroeck describes the third and last stage on the mystical way. Stace has omitted to point out what precedes the second sentence of the quotation. In the original translation, after Ruysbroeck has spoken of Interior Life in the previous chapter, the passage runs:

And after this there follows the union without distinction. For you must apprehend the Love of God not only as an outpouring with all good, and as drawing back again into the Unity; but it is also, above all distinction, an essential fruition in the bare Essence of the Godhead. And in consequence of this enlightened men ... <216>

I do not believe that these sentences function descriptively. Ruysbroeck is speaking of how God's love is to be found in Active Live and that love draws the mystic inwards towards the Unity in Interior Life. Love exists above the distinction between exterior and interior life, in the Essence of the Godhead. It is obvious that Ruysbroeck is trying to describe the mystic's way in a poetic/ symbolic manner here. There is nothing to indicate that what Ruysbroeck says is a literal description of a mystical experience. The expression "without distinctions" refers to the difference between God and the world, a difference that disappears in the third stage. The word "Unity" refers to the unity between God in the exterior and God in the interior of the mystic. I find it difficult to understand how this unity between experiencing God in the world and God in one's innermost self should be felt as undifferentiated unity, and neither is this evident from Ruysbroeck's utterances.

Stace has not shown that the mystical word "abyss" should be interpreted as a description of an experience of infinity. He only postulates that this word should be interpreted in this way. As we have seen, the concept of *abyss* stands for the Godhead, for the Unity beyond the Trinity, and is accordingly a theological and not a psychological concept. Ruysbroeck experienced the Godhead, to be sure, and thereby the abyss also, but what the content of the experience was we do not know.

Ruysbroeck uses the expression "darkness" in different senses depending on the stage he is speaking about. When Ruysbroeck speaks about darkness in connection with Interior Life, the concept is synonymous with spiritual purification, while the symbol in the last stage, which is the subject of this particular quotation, stands for the inactive aspect of the Godhead, "the Unconditioned Dark". <217>

It is possible that the word "wayless" stands for *distinctionless,* but then in philosophical, not in a psychological, sense. The word "wayless" stands together with "abyss" and therefore refers to God's unity, which is a unity without distinctions. <218> The same arguments may be put forward regarding the interpretation of the expressions "onefold" and "every ... creaturely distinction ceases and passes away".

In *The Teachings of the Mystics,* Stace has reproduced long passages from Ruysbroeck's works. The mystical expressions "abyss", "darkness" etc, are found on a number of occasions, but I do not think it is

necessary to take up all these quotations here. The arguments already presented concerning the interpretation of these expressions may also be applied to the texts in question.

However, in *The Teachings of the Mystics,* Stace also discusses some concepts that are not dealt with in *Mysticism and Philosophy.* <219> These are *nudity, void* and *emptiness.* Stace cites:

> ... this brightness is so great that the loving contemplative, in his ground wherein he rests sees and feels nothing but an incomprehensible Light; and through that Simple Nudity which enfolds all things, he finds himself, and feels himself, to be that same Light; by which he sees, and nothing else. <220>

> ... for the abysmal Waylessness of God is so dark and so unconditioned that it swallows up in itself every Divine way and activity and all the attributes of the Persons, within the rich compass of the essential Unity; and it brings about a Divine fruition in the abyss of the Ineffable. And here there is a death in fruition, and a melting and dying into the Essential Nudity, where all the Divine Names and all conditions, and all the living images which are reflected in the mirror of Divine Truth lapse in the Onefold and Ineffable, in waylessnes and without reason. <22l>

According to Stace. the mystical symbol *nudity* may be interpreted as meaning that Ruysbroeck has experienced a distinctionless unity. <222> Colledge takes another view. He thinks that Ruysbroeck, by using the symbol *nudity* wishes to express the idea that the mystic, during his experience of God, ha gone beyond his ordinary spiritual powers, beyond the capacity of the intellect <223> Underhill claims, however, that *nudity* stands for two things: first, the confusing nakedness of the consciousness when it gains contact with a dimension of reality that transcends the ordinary world built up of concepts, secondly, the necessity of going beyond the ordinary mental powers in order to experience God. <224>

If we return to the quotations concerned, we can easily see that both Colledge's and Underhill's interpretations may find support in the text of the second quotation. *Nudity* stands for the ineffable and is beyond the capacity of the intellect. In the first quotation, on the other hand, it is more difficult to find support for their interpretations. I should like to suggest a third interpretation here. In this, *Nudity* stands for God. Ruysbroeck writes "that Simple Nudity which enfolds all things", and six pages further on he writes:

> But in the possession of God, the man must sink down to that imageless Nudity which is God; <225>

In the sixth quotation, the word "void" is the object of Stace's analysis. He cites Ruysbroeck:

> And thereby the created image is united above reason in a threefold way with its Eternal Image, which is the origin of its being and its life; and this origin is preserved and possessed, essentially and eternally, through a simple seeing in an imageless void: and so a man is lifted up above reason in a threefold manner into the Unity, and in a onefold manner into the Trinity. Yet the creature does not become God, for the union takes place in God through grace and our homeward-turning love: and therefore the creature in its inward contemplation feels a distinction and an otherness between itself and God. <226>

This quotation comes from Chapter Xl of *The Book of Supreme Truth,* in which Ruysbroeck deals with the second stage of the mystical way. Again Ruysbroeck describes experiences as characterized by absence of mental images. That the consciousness should be experienced as an absolute void, as Stace claims <227>, is contradicted by the second half of the quotation. Ruysbroeck writes there that "the creature in its inward contemplation feels a distinction and an otherness between itself and God". Thus, Ruysbroeck did not experience a void. He experienced God and that he was distinct from God. However, what this felt like, that is, what the content of the experience was, Ruysbroeck does not say.

Stace believes that he can find descriptions of the timelessness of the mystical experience in the seventh and eighth quotations:

> For His coming consists, beyond time, in an eternal Now, which is ever received with new longings and new joy. <228>

For, though even here there are distinction and otherness according to intellectual perception, yet this likeness is one with the same Image of the Holy Trinity, which is the wisdom of God and in which God beholds Himself and all things in an eternal Now, without before and after. <229>

How Stace could gather from these utterances that Ruysbroeck had experienced timelessness is a puzzle to me. That it is God that is eternal and who comes to the mystic in eternity is not the same as saying that the mystic experiences timelessness. Ruysbroeck speaks philosophically here even when he is writing about the mystical experience.

In the ninth quotation Stace believes that Ruysbroeck is describing the mystical experience as characterized by a void, expressed by the word "emptiness". <230> Stace cites:

> And in the Light one becomes seeing; and this Divine Light is given to the simple sight the spirit, where the spirit receives the brightness which is God Himself, above all gifts and every creaturely activity, in the idle emptiness in which the spirit has lost himself through fruitive love, and where it receives without means the brightness of God, and is changed without interruption into that brightness which it receives. Behold, this mysterious brightness, in which one sees everything that one can desire according to the emptiness of the spirit: this brightness is so great that the loving contemplative, in his ground wherein he rests, sees and feels nothing but an incomprehensible Light; <23l>

Colledge believes that "emptiness" expresses the idea that the experience unity with God goes beyond ordinary forms of experience and beyond the intellect. <232> Accordingly, Colledge interprets the sentences as functioning figuratively. The quotation comes from the third chapter of *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage,* a chapter which deals with the third stage of the mystical way. In my view, Colledge's interpretation is supported by the text in question. The mystic has transcended reason and other mental powers that belong to creation. I do not believe that Stace's interpretation is preferable. Ruysbroeck does not state that the consciousness is empty. According to Underhill, the word "ledich", that has been translated as "emptiness", stand for passivity. <233> That the consciousness should be passive is a prerequisite, as we have seen, for God being infused into the soul. Moreover, Ruysbroeck himself clearly says that the soul is filled with God. So the experience cannot be empty. As mentioned before, Stace has constructed a paradox that is not supported by the text. The experience is not characterized t paradoxicality. "Above reason" is not the same as "against reason".

With the help of the tenth quotation, Stace tries to show that Ruysbroeck mystical experience was characterized by paradoxicality. <234> Stace cites

> Tranquillity according to His essence, activity according to His nature: absolute repose absolute fecundity... The Divine Persons who form one sole God are in the fecundity their nature ever active; and in the simplicity of their essence they form the Godhead .... Thus God according to the Persons is Eternal Work; but according to the essence and its perpetual stillness, He is Eternal Rest. <235>

I cannot, however, find anything in this quotation that would support Stace interpretation. Ruysbroeck speaks of God's immanence and transcendence not about the experience being characterized by paradoxicality.

The question of the paradoxicality of the experience also touches on the phenomenon of ineffability. But not only has Stace not shown that Ruysbroec expresses himself paradoxically, he has not shown that Ruysbroeck was confused about any paradoxical utterances that may exist. Thus Stace has not found any reliable support for his explanation of the phenomenon of ineffability in Ruysbroeck's utterances.

As mentioned previously, I have found that Stace's interpretation of certain utterances of Ruysbroeck indicates that these may have a descriptive function, at least regarding two non-content-related properties, lack of images and absence of thoughts. But a requirement for accepting this interpretation is, however, that Ruysbroeck's ideas about the question of ineffability should preferably not contradict this result. As we have seen, Stace has not met this requirement by putting forward tenable arguments in support of his claim that Ruysbroeck uses the word "ineffable" in the way Stace suggests. Stace has therefore not shown that the sentences in question function descriptively and that we can identify Ruysbroeck's mystical experience using these sentences as a starting-point.

Nevertheless, as I have found some sentences in Ruysbroeck's work that may function descriptively, and as this is of importance to the discussion of the question of identification, I have chosen, as in the case of Buber, to try to discover whether Stace's interpretation is adequate or not. I have therefore studied Ruysbroeck's works to determine how he uses the word "ineffable". The result of this investigation is as follows. I have found three utterances about the ineffability of the mystical experience. According to Ruysbroeck, the mystical experience can be ineffable in three senses. First of all, it is difficult to conceptualize the experience. This applies to mystical visions. <236> But the experience also sometimes includes exclamations and speaking when ecstasy is at its height. This experience of ecstasy, of joy, cannot be expressed in words, says Ruysbroeck. <237> The latter meaning of the concept of ineffability comes closest to the explanation suggested by the theory of emotion. But as Ruysbroeck obviously does not believe that the mystical experience is only an emotional one, the theory of emotion cannot completely explain Ruysbroeck's use of the word "ineffable". As Stace, in his definition, excludes visions and extreme ecstasy from the class of mystical experiences, I shall refrain from discussing the above meanings of the word "ineffable" any further. What is most interesting is what Ruysbroeck writes about the type of experience that is not characterized by being a vision or by extreme ecstasy. He writes as follows:

> Few men can attain to this Divine seeing, because of their own incapacity and the mysteriousness of the light in which one sees. And therefore no one will thoroughly understand the meaning of it by any learning or subtle consideration of his own; for all words, and all that may be learnt and understood in a creaturely way, are foreign to, and far below, the truth which I mean. <238>

4.3 Final Evaluation of All the Theories of Function and Ineffability

With the result of my analysis of Stace's selection of mystical texts as a basis, it is now possible to complete the evaluation of the theories presented in Chapters 2 and 3.

Stace in his later period puts forward three arguments why mystical sentences logically can and actually function descriptively. The first is that an investigation of specific mystical sentences shows that they actually do function descriptively. The second is that studies of the methods with whose help the mystic attempts to obtain mystical experiences show that the mystical experience should be characterized by the properties the mystics, according to Stace, actually describe. The third argument is that the mystical experience is not ineffable despite the mystics claim to the contrary.

My analysis has shown that only in one case can Stace refer to sentences that actually function descriptively. This applies to two sentences of Jan van Ruysbroeck. But these sentences only function descriptively with regard to non-content-related properties, not to content-related ones. None of the sentences that Stace cites therefore contains a description of the content of the mystical experience.

The second argument is based on a false conclusion. The character of the experience cannot be inferred from studies of methods for obtaining mystical experiences. The third argument has not been shown to have any support in the mystical texts that Stace has cited. I have not found any examples of paradoxes in Stace's sense, but have, on the other hand, found utterances about ineffability. This result supports the criticism directed against Stace's theory in Chapter 3, namely that many mystical texts do not contain paradoxes, that certain paradoxes are pseudo-paradoxes, and that there are mystics who do not express themselves paradoxically but nevertheless claim that the mystical experience is ineffable. Nor have I found support for the idea that mystics are confused when it comes to reporting their experiences, something that agrees with Berdie's criticism of Stace.

Thus my conclusion is that Stace has not shown that there are mystical sentences that actually function descriptively. Some sentences from Ruysbroeck's writings do in fact function descriptively, however, in respect of non-content-related properties, even if Stace has not shown this.

In his intermediate period Stace puts forward two arguments for his theory of the semantic function of mystical experiences. The first is that mystical sentences cannot function descriptively as the experience is logically ineffable, the second that mystical language would contain paradoxes if the sentences were interpreted as functioning descriptively.

Both arguments are untenable. My investigation and the result of the discussion in Chapter 3 show that the mystics use the concept of ineffability in various ways. To say that mystical sentences do not function descriptively because all mystics claim that the mystical experience is logically ineffable is therefore indefensible. I have also suggested that there is at least one mystic, Jan van Ruysbroeck, who probably used the word "ineffable" in terms of logical ineffability without the sentences functioning non-descriptively. The concept of logical ineffability referred "only" to the content-related properties of the experience, while the non-content-related ones were reported. The mystical sentences thus functioned descriptively even though the experience was logically ineffable.

There is no support for the second argument either. Both my own investigation and those of others have shown that mystical language does not contain paradoxes, or that what appear to be paradoxes are pseudo-paradoxes. Thus Stace in his intermediate period has not shown that mystical sentences cannot logically and do not actually function descriptively.

The same arguments presented against Stace's theory in the intermediate period may also be directed against Troy Organ's theory. The latter puts forward two reasons why mystical sentences cannot logically, and do not actually, function descriptively. The first argument is that the mystical experience is "absolutely" ineffable, the second that mystics are spiritual leaders and use mystical language for teaching purposes.

The second argument is, as mentioned previously, untenable. It does not follow from the fact that mystical sentences may be used inspirationally, evocatively or expressively that they cannot function descriptively. But the first argument is also untenable. The analysis in this chapter and the result of the discussion in Chapter 3 have shown that the mystics use the concept of ineffability in several different ways. It is therefore impossible to make a general assertion that mystical sentences cannot logically function descriptively because the mystical experience is regarded as "absolutely" ineffable by all mystics. Moreover, there are mystics who claim that the mystical experience is logically ineffable while this does not prevent mystical sentences from functioning descriptively. For the mystical experience is "only" logically ineffable with regard to content-related properties. The mystic both can, and does in fact, describe the non-content-related properties of the experience. Thus Organ is mistaken when he claims that mystical sentences cannot logically function descriptively. On the other hand, he is right in his criticism of Stace. Stace has not succeeded in presenting any example of a sentence that functions, descriptively.

This is as far as the evaluation of each theory of the semantic function goes. My investigation can, however, shed light on some of the criticism expressed against each theory. Concerning the function theory of Stace in

his later period, Corbenic alleged that the mystical expressions 'fading away" and "melting away" do not describe mystical experiences but experiences during the process that leads to mystical experiences. As is evident from my analysis, Corbenic's criticism is untenable as these expressions cannot be interpreted in this way. My analysis of the mystical words "darkness" and "silence" in Ruysbroeck and of "peace" in Koestler has shown that they occur in sentences that function theophilosphically/analogously and that they are neither quasimetaphors nor inadequate descriptions. Stace is correct when he interprets these expressions as symbols, but they are not symbols of properties of mystical experiences but of God. Corbenic is too general in his interpretation of mystical words. He assumes that a mystical expression can only be interpreted in one way. But, as we have seen, identical mystical words may be used in different ways by different mystics, or even in different ways by the same mystic, depending on the context.

The analysis in this chapter supports the criticism that has been directed against Stace's theory in the intermediate period. Mystical sentences do not function only evocatively, and they do not only contain symbols.

From my evaluation of all the function theories I thus conclude that Stace in later years has not shown that mystical sentences can logically and actually function descriptively. But the arguments against the possibility of mystical sentences functioning descriptively, logically and in fact, have also been shown to be untenable. I have defended Stace's theory by showing that it is at least likely that in one case the mystical sentences function descriptively, even if the descriptions only include the non-content-related properties of the experience.

With regard to the explanations of the phenomenon of ineffability presented in Chapter 3, it is easy to see that my investigation corroborates the preliminary results that I arrived at on that occasion. The word "ineffable" is used by different mystics, or even by the same mystic, in different ways. In my analysis I found support for the theory of logical ineffability, the theory of conceptual ineffability, the emotion theory and for Smart's theory, sense (iii). I was somewhat surprised to find the last, as I had formerly regarded this as an unlikely alternative. Unfortunately, Symonds use of the concept of ineffability did not allow identification of mystical experiences in this case, as Symonds combined Smart's sense (iii) with ineffability in terms of conceptual ineffability, a theory that does not permit identification in the present state of research.

Through my suggestion for the interpretation of Ruysbroeck´s utterances about ineffability, I have indicated a modification of the theory of logical ineffability. A mystical experience can, first, be logically ineffable during the experience or after the experience or at both these times, secondly, it can be logically ineffable with regard to the content-related but not to the non-content-related properties of the experience.

   From my evaluation of the theories of ineffability I therefore conclude that mystical utterances support Smart's theory, sense (iii), the theory of conceptual ineffability, the theory of non-experiential ineffability (Teresa of Avila), the emotion theory and the theory of logical ineffability. No irrefutable support for Stace's later theory, Smart's theory, senses (i) - (ii) and (iv), or for Gale's theory has been presented in the form of mystical utterances. All the alternative meanings of the word "ineffable" presented in Chapter 3 are, however, possible. What meanings are probable/most common future research will show.

   Finally, with regard to our choice of method, we have seen that that of Stace in his later period is more productive than that of Organ/Stace in his intermediate period. Without this procedure I would not have been able to find that Ruysbroeck's utterances can function descriptively. But Stace's later theory is not as fruitful as the method I have suggested. The utterances about ineffability should be compatible with our interpretation of the semantic functions of individual sentences. With the help of this method I have been able to find mystical sentences that function descriptively even though I have taken the mystic's talk of ineffability seriously.

4.4. Implications for the Problem of Identification

In the Introduction I stated the necessary condition for being able to identify properties of mystical experiences by a scientific method. First of all we have to show that there is a relationship between the meaning of mystical words/ sentences and mystical experiences, so that we may draw conclusions about the properties of the experience in question on the basis of the mystical expressions used. Secondly, we have to show that mystical sentences can logically and actually function descriptively and, thirdly, that mystical experiences are not ineffable or are not ineffable in a sense that prevents the identification of mystical experiences.

Stace in his later years has implicitly attempted to show that it is partly possible to fulfil the necessary conditions for identification. My task has been, above all, to examine Stace's solution to this problem.

In Chapter 1 I studied the meaning of mystical words and sentences. I concluded that the only theory that had been applied to mystical language, the theory of use, did not allow identification of mystical experiences. Stace in his later period has neither argued for nor, on the basis of the referential theory he prefers, applied it to mystical language. Thus there is no theory today that allows the possibility of identifying mystical experiences by a scientific method with regard to the meaning of mystical words/sentences.

In Chapter 2 I dealt with the semantic functions of mystical sentences. I presented three theories, of which only the one formulated by Stace in his later period admits that mystical sentences logically can, and in fact do, function descriptively, something that is a prerequisite for enabling identification. All the theories were, however, problematic. They presupposed, among other things, a specific explanation of the declared ineffability of the mystical experiences. To be able to make a final evaluation of the function theories I was therefore forced to explain what is meant by the mystical word "ineffable". This was done in Chapter 3, where I presented nine explanations of the phenomenon of ineffability. Only two of these enable identification of mystical experiences by a scientific method, that of Stace in his later period and that of Ninian Smart (senses (i), (ii) and (iii)). But all the theories were beset with difficulties. They seemed to be too general. Nor did they logically exclude one another, which means that the word "ineffable" can be used in one way by one mystic and in another way by another.

On the basis of the results arrived at in Chapters 2 and 3, I chose to examine the mystical texts that Stace had cited in support of his theory. My examination showed that the support that Stace presented is not valid. In other words, Stace has not shown that mystical sentences actually function descriptively. On the other hand, I found that some of the sentences that Stace had cited from Ruysbroeck's writings may be shown to function descriptively, even after considering the utterances about ineffability. Consequently, the theory from Stace's later period is preferable to other theories that do not allow that mystical sentences logically can and actually function descriptively.

With respect to the problem of ineffability, I found that Stace's support in the form of mystical utterances was not defensible, but I also found that mystical utterances may be cited in support of the theory of logical ineffability, the theory of conceptual ineffability, the emotion theory and Smart's theory, sense (iii). The conclusion was therefore that the mystical experience cannot in general be said to be "absolutely" ineffable. It is therefore logically and actually possible to identify the mystical experience with regard to the phenomenon of ineffability using a scientific method, at least as far as the non-content-related properties of the experience are concerned.

The conclusion is that Stace in his later years has not succeeded in solving any of the problems that I believe should be solved before the identification of a mystical experience by a scientific method can be undertaken. Consequently, Stace has not shown that it is possible to identify mystical experiences by a scientific method.

However, I have shown that it is possible to develop an identification theory. Perhaps it is possible to formulate and argue for a referential theory applied to mystical language. I have also repudiated theories claiming that mystical sentences cannot logically, and in fact do not, function descriptively, and theories

claiming that all mystical experiences in all connections are logically, ineffable. Mystical sentences that function descriptively regarding the non content-related properties of the experience do exist and the concept of ineffability is sometimes used by mystics in such as way that at least the non content-related properties of the experience can be identified. Accordingly even though there is no theory today that shows that it is possible to identify mystical experiences by a scientific method, there is a basis for developing such a theory in the future, at least as far as the non-content-related properties of the experience are concerned. It is, however, doubtful whether it is of interest to research to establish the non-content-related properties of the mystical experience without finding out what the mystic has actually experienced. At the moment the most interesting aspect of the study of mystical experiences, that is studies of the content of the mystical experience, appears to be excluded from research.

4.5.   Implications for Other Problems within Research into Mysticism

Stace's implicit theory about the possibility of identifying mystical experiences by a scientific method is the only one available today. As Stace has not shown that identification is possible, this has implications for other problems within research into mysticism. Some of these implications are indicated below:

Philosophers believe that mystics claim to gain knowledge of a transcendent reality through the mystical experience. In this connection, they often treat the mystical experience as a criterion of knowledge. This can be done in at least two ways: either one tries to determine if there is a common core in the mystical experiences or one tests the description of the experience to decide whether the experience is illusory or not. Both methods may of course be combined. In both cases, however, it is assumed that the mystical experience is identifiable. If it is not possible to identify a mystical experience, these theories are weakened.

Another problem concerns the so called question of cognition. We have encountered Stace's conception in this respect. Stace distinguishes between what I have called *doctrinal interpretation* and *classification interpretation.* But there are other alternatives. One such is that mystical names for God refer to the experience and are not an intellectual addition. Whatever theory, from these or others, that we choose to support, it is assumed that the experience can be identified. If this is not possible, then we cannot determine what theory is preferable.

The result of my investigation also affects the ontological question, that is whether the object that the mystic says he gains knowledge of exists in reality or whether we may discover the nature of reality by means of mystical experiences. The theories that, for instance, attempt to show the reasonableness of God's existence by referring to the fact that mystical experiences have certain characteristic properties are difficult to defend if identification is impossible.

During the last ten years some researchers have investigated parallels between the utterances of the mystics about the nature of reality, on the one hand, and experience within modern quantum physics on the other. To the extent that these parallels concern the mystical experience, the question of identification is also relevant to the evaluation of this research.

The problem of identification is also relevant to the question of the relationship between mysticism and ethics. To clarify this possible relationship, whether it is logical or actual, it is sometimes necessary to know what the properties of the mystical experience are, on the basis of which we can then judge the possible consequences for morals and value judgements. If we are unable to determine the properties of the experience, then we cannot discuss ethical problems within mysticism in these cases either.

The next problem is a general one for researchers into mysticism, namely, the necessity of demarcating the area of research. To study mysticism it is advisable to begin first by delimiting the subject area with the help of a definition. In this definition it is explained that the mystical phenomenon has the identifiable properties X_1-X_n. In so far as the definition is based on the properties of the experience, my problem is relevant to this

delimitation. If identification is not possible, the whole field of research must be questioned or revised. We should therefore be cautious about adopting the results that are based on definitions in which the properties of the experience are included.

Another problem concerns the relationship between drugs and mystical experiences. Discussion has been lively with regard to whether drugs can give rise to identical, or at least similar, experiences as those the mystics have. Even such a discussion assumes, if the comparison applies to properties of the experience, that we can identify the mystical experience. Caution should therefore be observed when evaluating the studies based on comparisons of properties between mystical experiences and drug experiences.

The next problem concerns the classification of mystical experiences and may be seen as an extension of the problem of definition. Several attempts have been made, even among philosophers, to systematize mystical experiences into several types. A classic example of this is Stace's division into extrovertive and introvertive mystical experiences. It is obvious that even such a classification presupposes that identification is possible. When we evaluate scientific investigations of mystical experiences, we should therefore be aware that at present the classification of mystical experiences cannot be based on properties of the mystical experience.

Finally, the problem of identification is also relevant to non-behaviourist explanative psychology to the extent that the explanation is based on properties of the mystical experience. To explain the origin of the experience, the psychologist needs to be able to identify the experience to be explained. As identification has not been shown to be possible, these investigations stand on unsafe ground.

Notes

1. Frederick J Streng has noticed how standpoints in epistemology and ontology determine mystics views on ineffability and the function of mystical sentences. See Streng 1978.
2. See the Introduction, note 3
3. The concept of literary genre is both vague and has been severely criticized. However, I have found it useful for the purpose of my study. Through the concept of mystical genre it is possible to distinguish first-hand from second-hand sources, something which, among other things, is very useful for the discussion of the main problem.

4. Keller 1978, pp 80-84
5. Keller 1978, pp 84-85
6. Keller 1978, pp 85-87
7. Keller 1978, pp 87-89
8. Keller 1978, pp 89-91
9. Keller 1978, pp 91-92
10. Keller 1978, pp 92-94
11. Keller 1978, p 94
12. Keller 1978, p 95
13. Moore 1978, p 103. Moore thinks that the vast majority of mystical texts used to support theory of logical ineffability are to be found in the last group and therefore should not relied upon when discussing the phenomenon of ineffability. This is an interesting but unfortunately, Moore has not shown that this is the case. See Moore 1978, p 103.
14. When mystics utter sentences like 'when one is experiencing God', Berdie argues that cannot be sure whether the mystics are talking about their own experiences or making exposition of a theological doctrine. In addition, Berdie continues, it is impossible determine with certainty if the mystic is talking about his own experiences even if we could determine that he is describing mystical experiences (Berdie 1979, pp 143-144). Berdie is right in pointing out difficulties in determining with certainty if the mystic is talking about own experiences when speaking in the third person. But I think Berdie is exaggerating when he states that the experiences of these mystics therefore cannot be studied. The reason using the

third person is often that the mystic does not wish to advertise himself or that it is a traditional way of speaking. In my opinion, it is possible to determine whether the mystic really is describing experiences of his own by studying the linguistic context of the utterance. This will be made clear in this chapter.

15. See e g Happold 1971, p 56
16. See e g Dasgupta 1924, pp 150-158 and Smart 1980, pp 163-164
17. See Smart 1980, pp 119-120.
18. Scholem 1961, p 121
19. The idea that there exists a relationship between ineffability, on one side, and mystical states of consciousness, on the other, has been observed by others but noone has, to my knowledge developed this idea any further. See Jones 1909, pp 75-76, Moore 1978, pp 104-105, Nicholson 1979, pp 148-149.
20. Radhakrishnan 1953, p 22, Müller 884, p xix. Stace himself knows that the authors of Upanishads are anonymous but he hasn't drawn the logical conclusion from this as far as the identification problem is concerned. The quotations Stace utilizes and the interpretation made of them are to be found in 1960a, pp 88-90, 99-100, 102, 118, 194-195, 209-210, 240-241, 255, 271, 274, 277, 284, 288-289, 299, 309, 315, in Stace 1960b, pp 20, 30-48 and in Stace 1962, pp 302-303.
21. Müller 1879, p xii-xiii.
22. Müller 1879, p lxxi
23. Stace utilizes a translation of the Upanishads which with in comparison to the authorized versions of Müller and Hume contains, according to Masson & Masson 'abbreviations, distortions, alterations and general "Americanizing" of the text '(Masson & Masson 1976, p 118).
24. Müller 1884, p xxvi
25. According to Masson & Masson, Stace utilizes an abbreviated version of the sayings of Ramakrishna. Besides, Stace seems to have mixed up two different works about Ramakrishna. See Masson & Masson 1976, pp 112-114. The quotations Stace utilizes and the interpretation made of them are to be found in Stace 1960a, pp 76-77, 133 and 303.
26. Stace 1960b, pp 67-68. Stace admits that there are difficulties in determining the nature of the mystical experiences on the basis of classical mystical texts. See Stace 1960a, p 109 and Stace 1960b, p 29.
27. The quotations Stace utilizes and the interpretations he makes of them are to be found in Stace 1960a, pp 123-127, 170, 199, 201, 315.
28. Among others, Stace has made use of *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha,* edited by E A Burn. According to Masson & Masson, however, Burn explicitly states that his work is not meant to be scientific. It is therefore not advisable to utilize such a source in a scientific thesis. See Masson & Masson 1976, 118 and Burn 1955, p 25.
29. Evans-Wentz 1949, pp 66-67, 72, 75, 77
30. The quotation from Bardo Thödol will be found in Stace 1960a. pp 169-170.
31. Stace 1960b, p 102
32. Stace 1960b, pp 103-104
33. Encyclopaedia of Islam 1960, p 162
34. In Stace 1960a, pp 56-57, 106, 115 and in Stace 1960b, p 205.
35. Copleston 1962, vol 1, part II, pp 207-208
36. Mackenna 1956, p 20
37. Stace does not give any reference to a specific page but I have traced the quotation to page 60 in the 1976 edition. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 77.
38. Stace 1960a, p 112
39. Berdie 1979, p 54
40. Stace writes in Stace 1960a "The Enneads V1, IX, and XI" but this is probably a misprint. See Stace 1960a, pp 104,233,285 and Stace 1962, p 309.
41. Inge 1918 and Armstrong 1953. See Stace 1960b, pp 113-123.
42. See Stace 1960a, pp 113,223,244-2455256
43. See Clark 1949, pp 72-74,115-116
44. Clark 1949, p 66
45. See Stace 1960a, pp 109,117-118,169,176-1779269
46. Stace 1960b, p 29

47. See Stace 1960a, p 117. See also Stace 1967b, p 32
48. Barrett 1956, p 105
49. Smith 1950, p 35. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 115.
50. Smith 1950, p 137, note 31
51. Today there exist excerpts of the works of Al-Junayd translated into English (see Abdel Kader 1962). However, the quotation in question is not to be found in this work.
52. Stace 1960a, pp 71-76
53. Stace 1960a, p 69. Stace hasn't given any reference to a specific page but I have traced the quotation in question to page 48 in the 1931 edition. Stace has not quoted Brinton fully correctly but this does not affect my analysis.
54. Stace 1960a, p 303
55. Boehme 1914, p 488. The text in the original runs as follows:
12.Was aber für ein Triumphiren im Geiste gewesen, kan ich nicht schreffien oder reden: es lässt sich auch mit nichts vergleichen als nur mit deme, wo mitten im Tode das Leben geboren wird, und vergleicht sich der Auferstehung von den Todten.
13. In diesem Lichte hat mein Geist aisbald durch alles gesehen, und an allen Kreaturen, so wol an Kraut und Gras Gott erkant, wer der sey, und wie der sey und was sein Wille sen: auch so isst alsbald in diesem Lichte mein Willen gewachsen mit grossen Trieb, was Wesen Gottes zu beschreiben.(Boehme 1955, vol 1, page 266)
56. Boehme 1914, pp 260-261
57. Boehme 1914, p 595
58. Boehme 1960, vol 3, p 115. In an English translation: Christ saith, I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me, shall have the light of the eternal life. He doth not direct us to the flattering hypocrites, murderers, and contenders but only to himself: we should see (with the inward eyes) in his light, and so we should see him, for he is the light: (Boehme 1909, pp 174-175)
59. Brinton 1931, p 234. See also Brinton 1931, pp 149-150.
60. Underhill 1961, p 256. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 69
61. Martensen 1885, p 7. Quoted in Underhill 1961, p 256.
62. Stace 1960a, pp 47-51
63. Stace 1960a, p 78. To my knowledge there are three versions of Bucke's description of his mystical experience. These are found in (a) Cosmic *Consciousness* by R M Bucke, 1967, pp 910 (b) *Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada,* 1906, series 11, vol 12, p 178, reported by James H Coyne (e) a private pamphlet quoted by William James in *Varieties of Religious Experience, p 385* in the 1979 edition. The latter is the source that Stace refers to, although Stace has not quoted James fully correctly. The big difference between James and Stace's versions and the more official ones is that Bucke in the former writes in the first person singular but in the latter in the third person. Besides, the latter contains an interpretation of the experience in Hinduistic terms. After the phrase 'intellectual illumination impossible to describe' Bucke writes: "Into his brain streamed one momentary lightning-flash of the Brahmic Splendor which has ever since lightened his life; upon his heart fell one drop of Brahmic bliss, leaving thenceforward for always an aftertaste of heaven." (Bucke 1967, p 10. See also Coyne 1906, p 178) Obviously, Stace is wrong when he concludes that Bucke is a profane mystic (Stace 1960a, p 67).
64. Stace 1960a, pp 78-79
65. Bucke 1967, pp 72,258,345
66. Bucke 1967, p 73
67. Bucke 1967, p 74,235,283
68. Bucke 1967, pp 73,194
69. Bucke 1967, pp 3, 74, 79
70. Bucke 1967, pp 3, 74
71. Bucke 1967, p 300
72. Bucke 1967, p 99
73. Stace 1960a, p 84
74. Montague 1916, pp 591-592. Quoted in Stace 1960a, pp 83-84.
75. Stace 1960a, p 84

76. Ibid
77. See Stace 1960a, pp 51-55
78. Stace 1960a, pp 81-83
79. Stace 1960a, p 106 and Stace 1962, p 309.
80. Smith 1950, p 109
81. In *The Teachings of the Mystics* Stace also includes other Islamic mystics but Stace does not specify what words/sentences are descriptions of mystical experiences. See Stace 1960b, pp 201-220. Abu Hamid Muhammed B Muhammed al-Tusi al-Shafr 'I (Al-Ghazali, 1111 +) is not considered to be a mystic by Stace in *The Teachings* and will therefore not be treated (Stace 1960b, p 203).
82. Stace 1960a, pp 254, 256
83. Iyengar 1945, p 267
84. Iyengar 1945, p 269
85. Iyengar 1945, p 274
86. Iyengar 1945, p 276
87. Ibid
88. Iyengar 1945, p 276
89. Iyengar 1945, pp 277-278
90. Iyengar 1945, pp 278-279
91. Iyengar 1945, p 280.
92. Iyengar 1945, p 281
93. Iyengar 1945, p 282
94. Iyengar 1945, p 283
95. See Stace 1960b, p 50
96. Aurobindo 1939-1940, p 41. Partly quoted in Stace 1960a, p 176.
97. Stace 1960a, p 176
98. Masson & Masson 1976, p 117
99. Stace 1960a, p 176
100. Besides, Stace has not quoted Aurobindo fully correctly but this fault does not affect my argument.
101. See Aurobindo 1949, p 28 in comparison to Aurobindo 1939-1940, p 41.
102. Stace 1960a, p 176. Aurobindo's description of his mystical experience cannot be classified either as an introvertive or as an extrovertive mystical experience, the two kinds of mystical experiences that Stace has adopted. Aurobindo's experience is closer to what may be called an 'integrated introvertive mystical experience', an experience characterized by including both mystical elements and sensory perception. See Stace 1960a, p 336 where this type of mystical experience is hinted at by Aurobindo.
103. Stace 1960a, p 302
104. Experts on Aurobindo seem to agree that *The Life Divine* deals primarily with metaphysical questions. See Iyengar 1945, p 295.
105. Aurobindo 1970, pp 22-23. Partly quoted in Stace 1960a, p 231 and in Stace 1960b, p 50. Stace has not quoted Aurobindo fully correctly. However, I shall limit myself only to treating those faults that are relevant to my argument.
106. Stace 1960b, pp 50-51
107. Stace 1960a, p 200
108. Scholem 1961, p 5. Not fully correctly quoted in Stace 1960a, pp 106-107.
109. Stace 1960a, p 107
110. Katz 1978, pp 33, 35, 52. See also Scholem 1961, pp 25, 217-218, 221 and Scholem 1974, p 94-95.
111. Katz 1978, p 53. According to Scholem this utterance originates from David b Abraham ha-Lavan (1300th century) and is taken from the work *Masoret ha-Berit*. See *Kovez al-Yad* 1936, new series, i, p 31 (Scholem 1974, p 95).
112. Katz 1978, p 53
113. Katz 1978, pp 35-36
114. Scholem 1961, p 131. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 116. Stace has not quoted Scholem full correctly but this will not influence my analysis.
115. Stace 1960a, p 117. Quoted from Scholem 1961, p 131. Here too Stace has not quote

Scholem fully correctly, but the faults are irrelevant to the discussion of the main problem

116. Stace 1960a, p 117. See Scholem 1961, p 131.

117. Some of Abulafia's works and excerpts from his works do exist in English but reading those has not been of much help for the interpretation of the utterance in question. As these work were published in 1976, Stace did not have access to them. See Abulafia 1976.

118. Scholem 1961, pp 132-133

119. Clark 1949, p 19

120. Colledge 1981, p 34

121. Colledge 1981, p 39

122. Colledge 1981, p 41, Clark 1949, p 20

123. Clark 1949, pp 19-20

124. Colledge 1981, p 56

125. Eckhart has himself treated the question of whether it is possible to talk about God when He is considered to be ineffable. See Colledge 1981, pp 32-35. According to C F Kelley, Eckhart himself has stated that he discusses metaphysical comments on the Bible (Kelley 1977, p 10) 126. Stace has in several cases omitted to give any exact source. For instance, he takes his first quotation from Rudolf Otto's Mysticism *East and West.* However, Otto has not given any exact source but only refers to the editions by Pfeiffer, Büttner and Lehmann without telling us from which of these works and from what page the quotation is taken (see Stace 1960a, p 63 and Otto 1976, p 80). Besides, if the quotation was to be found in the Pfeiffer edition it would be difficult to utilize as this translation is considered inauthentic in many respects, something which was already well known when Stace was alive (see Clark 1949, p 32). The next quotation by Stace is also taken from Otto, who does not specify any exact source. However, Stace has said that the utterance in question can be found, with a slight modification, in Blakney 1941, p 173. (See Stace 1960a, p 64). But Stace is mistaken. I have not managed to find the present quotation at all. However, even if this utterance and the utterance referred to above should be considered to be authentic, it is doubtful whether it is possible to identify Eckhart's mystical experience. See Berdie 1979, pp 89-91. In a third quotation, Stace only refers to the awkward Pfeiffer edition which contains 900 pages (Stace 1960a, p 172) etc.

127. Blakney 1941, pp 200-201. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 98, not fully correctly.

128. Stace 1960a, p 98

129. Blakney 1941, p 201

130. Blakney 1941, p 200. Quoted in Stace 1960b, p 155

131. Blakney 1941, p 200.

132. Stace 1960a, p 309. Almost quoted correctly from Blakney 1941, p 153. See Stace 1960a, p 99, where Stace admits that when Eckhart talks about going beyond time, he may be using his sentences instructively.

133. Stace 1960a, p 318. Almost quoted correctly from Blakney 1941, p 131.

134. Blakney 1941, p 211. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 172.

135. Stace 1960a, pp 171-172

136. Blakney 1941, p 226. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 173.

137. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 175. A totally wrong quotation from Blakney 1941, p 247.

138. Stace 1960a, pp 173,175

139. For a discussion of paradoxes in Eckhart's works, see Almond 1982, p 190, Otto 1976, pp 200-201, Kvastad 1980, pp 149-150, Jones 1979, p 268.

140. Stace 1960a, p 64.

141. Stace has found one utterance by Teresa in William James *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902) (Stace 1960a, p 68, James 1979, p 397). James for his part is referring to Teresa's autobiography in a French edition, *Vie.* Unfortunately, James does not specify the year of publication or the name of the translator. As a matter of fact, there are a huge number of French translations of Teresa's autobiography published before 1902. I have studied the P Marcel Boix edition from 1867, which James utilizes when he quotes Teresa in other places in *The Varieties,* but with no result. Nor did I manage to find the present utterance in other French editions available in Scandinavia. The only way to check the quotation and especially to study its linguistic context is to gain access to other French editions from France.

According to Catalogue General from 1959, however, there exist no less than 52 editions of the present work. To study all these would cost a lot of money and take a huge amount of time. I have therefore chosen not to undertake such a project. My conclusion is that Stace in this case has utilized an English translation of a French translation of a Spanish original. With only the present quotation available I am unable to check it or to analyze its linguistic context in order to determine the semantic functions of the mystical sentences in question. However, I have also difficulty accepting the way Stace interprets what Teresa writes in this place. Teresa does not write that she experienced that all was one. She does write that she experiences what everything looks like through the eyes of God and how everything is contained in God, but that is something else. Stace interprets the word 'God' as implying that Teresa experiences that all is one. But I cannot find any support for this interpretation in the present utterance by Teresa. (See Stace 1960a, pp 68-69).

142. Stace 1960b. p 180. Taken from Peers 1957a, vol 1, p 110.

143. Peers 1957a, vol I, p 111

144. Reinhardt 1957, p 51. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 103. Almost correctly quoted by Stace.

145. Stace 1960a, p 102

146. Stace 1960a, p 186

147. Dicken 1963, pp 126-127

148. Stace 1960a, p 186

149. Reinhardt 1957, pp 210-211. Quoted in Stace 1960b, p 197, not fully correctly.

150. Stace 1960b, p 186

151. Reinhardt 1957, p 211. Also quoted in Stace 1960b, p 197

152. Peers 1957b, p 430

153. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 119. See also Stace 1967b, p 31, where the quotation, however, is not identical. Stace has found the quotation in James *The Varieties* (James 1979, p 370, note 1), even if Stace's version is not identical to James'. Where James has taken his quotation from I do not know. It is not identical to but corresponds broadly to the original manuscript at Harward (this manuscript will soon be published). See Tennyson 1897, vol I, p 320.

154. Stace 1960a, pp 119-120

155. From the original manuscript at Harvard, University of Virginia

156. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 91. To my knowledge, there exist three versions of Symond's description of his mystical experience. These are found in (a) Brown 1903, pp 20-21 (b) James 1979, pp 371-372 (c) Stace 1960a, p 91. (b) and (c) contains abbreviations, something which Stace does not say, and I have not managed to find it either. As I am unable to check the present quotation and investigate its linguistic context, I shall abstain from further comments (See Stace 1960b, p 232).

173. Probably Koestler is referring here to C K Ogden & I A Richard's famous work *The Meaning of Meaning* from 1923.

174. Koestler 1954, p 352

175. Ibid

176. Ibid

177. This expression refers to those moments when Koestler tried to formulate his mystical experiences in words.

178. Koestler 1954, pp 353-354

179. Koestler 1954, p 352

180. Koestler 1955, p 99

181. Koestler 1954, p 349. Quoted in Stace 1960a, p 270

182. Stace 1960a, p 270

183. Stace has given an account of an interview with Koestler where Koestler seems to describe properties of mystical experiences, although not of its content (See Stace 1960a, p 122). But Stace has not given any reference to an exact source where we could find the interview, check it and analyze its linguistic context. Therefore it is doubtful whether Koestler uses the mystical language in the way Stace claims, especially having Koestler's own words on the function of mystical sentences in mind.

184. Stace also quotes Ruysbroeck from his *The Adornment o the Spiritual Marriage* where Stace claims that

> Ruysbroeck is describing a mystical experience. But according to Evelyn Underhill, it is impossible to translate the latter part of the present quotation in an adequate manner (after 'unity....' See Underhill 1974, p 257, note 39). It is therefore difficult to find out whether Ruysbroeck is describing how the ego dissolves and how he experiences an undifferentiated unity, which Stace claims (Stace 1960a, p 97. The quotation is taken from Underhill 1974, pp 177-178, but not quoted fully correctly by Stace.) without consulting the original text. Besides, the original was in verse which makes it even harder to make use of to identify a mystical experience (see Underhill 1974, p 257, note 39). As stated earlier, it is very difficult in these kinds of text to decide whether what is spoken of is an experience of the author or is just a poetical ornamentation. Because of the difficulties mentioned above I have chosen not to discuss the present quotation any further.

185. Stace 1960a, p 94. See also Stace 1960b, p 160, Stace 1962, p 307 and Stace 1967b, p 27. Quoted from Underhill 1974, pp 185-186. Only the quotation in Stace 1960b, however, is a fully correct reproduction of the text.
186. Stace 1960a, pp 94-95 and Stace 1962, p 307.
187. Stace 1960a, p 95 and Stace 1960b, p 159.
188. Stace 1960a, p 95. See also Stace 1960a, pp 159, 172. Also in this case Stace has only quoted Underhill fully correctly in Stace 1960b. See Underhill 1974, p 243.
189. Underhill 1914, p 59.
190. Underhill 1914, p 60.
191. Underhill 1914, pp 67-69.
192. Inge 1899, p 169.
193. Underhill 1914, pp 78-80.
194. Colledge 1952, pp 19-20.
195. Underhill 1914, p 78.
196. Colledge 1952, pp 19-20.
197. Underhill 1914, pp 80-81.
198. Underhill 1914, pp 83, 137
199. Underhill 1914, pp 84-5
200. Petry, 1957, p 289
201. Underhill 1914, pp 78
202. Colledge 1952, p 20
203. Underhill 1914, pp 85-87
204. Underhill 1914, p 87. According Underhill from *The Seven Degrees of Love*, chap xiv.
205. See also Inge 1899, pp 168-171, Jones 1909, pp 310-314, Petry 1957, pp 287-290 and Smart 1972c, vol 7, p 268.
206. See Stace 1960b, p 87
207. Underhill 1974, pp 184-187
208. Underhill 1974, p 186
209. Underhill 1974, p 98
210. Underhill 1974, p 187
211. Underhill 1974, p 185
212. Stace 1960a, pp 95-96, p 173 and Stace 1962, p 308. The quotation is taken from Underhill 1974, pp 244-245. Only in Stace 1960b, however, has Stace quoted Underhill fully correctly.
213. Stace 1960b, pp 18, 160
214. Stace 1960a, pp 96-97. See also 1960b, p 160 and Stace 1962, p 308.
215. Stace 1960a, p 96 and Stace 1962, p 308
216. Underhill 1974, pp 244-245
217. See Underhill 1914, pp 64, 134-135 and Inge 1899, p 182
218. See also Underhill 1974, p xxi
219. See Stace 1960b, pp 164, 166-167, 172
220. Stace 1960b, p 164. Taken from Underhill 1974, p 170

221. Stace 1960b, p 169. Taken from Underhill 1974, p 177
222. Stace 1960b, p 158
223. Colledge 1952, p 33
224. Underhill 1914, p 90
225. Underhill 1974, p 183
226. Stace 1960b, p 172. Taken from Underhill 1974, p 244.
227. Stace 1960b, p 159
228. Underhill 1974, p 171. Quoted in 1960b, p 165.
229. Underhill 1974, p 173. Quoted in 1960b, p 166.
230. Stace 1960b, p 159
231. Stace 1960b, p 164. Taken from Underhill 1974, p 170
232. Colledge 1952, p 33
233. Underhill 1974, p 256, note 30.
234. Stace 1960a, p 172
235. Stace 1960a, p 172. Taken from Underhill 1961, pp 434-435. Not quoted fully correctly.
236. Underhill 1974, pp 76-77
237. Underhill 1974, p 77
238. Underhill 1974, p 168
239. See also Underhill 1914, p 59
240. Colledge 1952, p 124. See also Underhill 1974, p 98. Besides considering mystical sentences functioning in a figuratively sense, Underhill also argues that they function evocatively. See Underhill 1914, p 88.

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