Possibilities of The Intuition of the Divine
A Conversation Point at Pure Experience

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Contents

Introduction

The juxtaposition of psychology and religion is at first glance an obvious one. Both of these disciplines look to describe and study those factors that are of greatest importance to humans. Both seek to work with the most intimate levels of humanity. Both are concerned with how humans think, act, and interact with others and the world in which they live. Both disciplines are extremely applicable to everyday life, for they conjure up frameworks to understand the essence of humanity.

Even with scant learning of these subjects, the observer quickly understands that there are significant difficulties with joining of these perspectives. Countless authorities in both camps have been outright hostile to the position that the other holds. Both sides have discounted and discredited the validity of the other. When I report I am a student of psychology and religion, I often hear, "That's an interesting mix." My response is that, yes, it is fascinating to be learning from two disciplines, each one of which at times tries to negate the existence of the other.

Psychology, which became a discipline in the 1800's, sought to analyze the human mind. As it progressed, so did its emphasis upon the empirical approach and the scientific method. Evolving out of philosophy, the tradition tried to distance itself from its heady, ungrounded parent. Early psychologists made a very conscientious effort to align the discipline with natural sciences, which had a longer history. Willheim Wundt pioneered the progression of psychology's venture into scientific empiricism. He had set a precedent for this with his Leipzig laboratory, the first built specifically for psychological research. By and large, psychology has been on a continual, and gradual, course away from the philosophical and toward a more scientific approach.

This progression has given heed to a great questioning of ideas that had previously gone unexamined. The Enlightenment period had arrived a century before. This was the rise of a practice that sought to scrutinize the mind categorically and brought about new avenues for questioning. Not only were previously accepted thoughts put up for debate, but the idea of thought itself became a point of contention. Suddenly, the enlightened mindset allowed for greater authority to back up the very notion of questioning, for this in itself was science, a great intellectual pursuit, and one that could be applied to the inner workings of the mind.

Through a variety of pens, the Enlightenment produced hard questioning of the concept and practice of religion. While doubts about the validity of religion had probably existed since the inception of its practice, psychology helped to edify and specify these doubts. Categorical roadblocks arose with the pervasive skepticism that turned upon religion and any other ideation that psychology could get its hands upon.

Adherents of institutionalized religion did not accept such criticism. In response, there has been a counter-attack upon psychology as a means of viewing the human condition. Spirituality has nothing to do with psychology, nothing to do with the workings of the mind, came the retort. Instead, it spoke of a Divine realm, which could not be touched by psychology.

Contentions between orthodox religion and scientific secularism, theology and psychology, poignantly intersect at the point of the religious experience. To define how one might speak of this phenomenon, the constitution of a religious experience must be clarified. The term "religious experience" has been used to designate many types of events and can include numerous traditions. Therefore, some thread must be found with which to identify these elements. A number of writers with very different backgrounds use the phrase "intuition of the Divine," and it is applicable to many more. While the connotations of this idea may differ, at its

core, this phrase refers to the assertion that a human being has some awareness of a wholly Other entity. This concept serves as a pinnacle, which may be viewed from various schools of thought and then built upon.

How then might one speak of the nature of the religious experience? Even having narrowed and defined what sort of experience is being referred to, from what perspective might this be seen? Probably coined first by Friedrich Schleiermacher, this terminology has existed and been used extensively within religious writing. This is a concept which has been key to great theological writings, being pinned in a philosophical framework. Such an idea is material to much of the very discipline of religion. However, there lies real doubt as to whether "the intuition of the Divine" is held captive solely by theology, or whether there may be other disciplines which may have substantive thought on the subject. Is such a concept wholly philosophical? Does it reside only within the notions of those most intellectual persons who choose to debate the most ethereal subjects? Is this concept wholly theoretical, having no grounding in reality and no secure lines to the concrete? And is this subject of the Divine relevant only in theological circles, worthy to be conversation only for the pious?

Looking on from another angle, there are those who would ask whether psychology might also be admitted to the foray. If there is a chance that "the intuition of the Divine" is not only a concept for theologians, psychology too may have a substantial addition to make to the conversation. If psychology did have something to add though, there would need to be an assumption that this concept was subject to psychological analysis. Psychology would need to be able to evaluate the workings of the human mind when concerned with such an occurrence. If this were not a possibility, psychology shall not have the possibility to comment.

Underlying the questions of which perspectives might possibly add to the discussion are further assumptions. What is it that actually constitutes the "intuition of the Divine?" Even under the definition agreed upon, given the perspective treating the question, there can be significant variation in the responses here. There is a theological response to this question, which will be examined through the writings of Friedrich Schleiermacher. This perspective may be the original one for this subject, but it is not the only one. There is also a psychological understanding of this phenomenon from the writings of William James, who had a broad background in the sciences while also having a healthy respect for religion. James has an understanding of the human mind and its workings which has profound parallels to the doctrine of pure experience found in Mahayana Buddhism and the philosophical writings of Nishida Kitaro.

Writers have approached the concept of the intuition of the Divine from multiple standpoints. Philosophers from both the East and the West have tackled the subject and have added great insight to the understanding of the intuition of the Divine. Seen through "pure experience," the intuition of the Divine is a concept that provides validation for religious experiences and creates an opportunity for further discussion between theology and psychology.

Ramifications of this far greater communication include projections to future study. The divide between psychology and religion is often quite apparent. However, there is a significant body of work already completed in the sub-field of the psychology of religion. While this research has covered a plethora of facets of religion, it has left the religious experience itself rather untouched. The concept of pure experience helps to bridge the gap between psychology and religion. It also further validates the religious experience in and of itself. The possibility of examining such experiences, as they are, becomes more plausible. The underpinning ideas

behind the validation of doing such research will be laid out in the context of verifying the data found in my own research on the intuition of the Divine.

Chapter One: Friedrich Schleiermacher

The "intuition of the Divine" is a concept that was first labeled as such by Friedrich Schleiermacher. The theology he formulated rests in large part upon this idea. The Christian Faith, his masterwork, is one of the most important texts in Protestant theology. Indeed, much Christian theology, as it currently stands, has been influenced by Schleiermacher's writings.

Schleiermacher therefore is an ideal source to draw from for understanding of theological perspectives. He may easily serve as an ideal indicator of the way in which the intuition of the Divine is understood theologically. Not only is his voice authoritative to speak for a religious standpoint, but his theology itself was so intertwined with the idea of this intuition, he makes the perfect expert for the subject.

Friedrich Schleiermacher directs his On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers (1799) to a sophisticated group of writers skeptical of religion's validity or proper place within society. It may be the influence of this audience that leads him to stay away from a more intellectual, doctrinal explanation of religion, but choose instead to explain it in terms of feeling and emotion.

For Schleiermacher, religion is a sense and taste for the Divine.[1] That is, the true essence of religion is not an intellectual, or academic belief, but is rather defined by feeling, described as "heartfelt reverence," "infinite smallness," "unaffected humility," "heartfelt love and affection," "gratitude," and "honor."[2] In this feeling, Friedrich Schleiermacher assumes there to be a connection between the "poles of the universe" and the individual, a grappling with the outer reaches of the universe, forming a transcendent experience.[3] While it is clear that his

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[1] Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 23.
[2] Ibid., p. 24.
[3] Ibid.

conceptualization of religion is based in emotion, he goes further still, to propose that faith is founded in imagination, a crucial facet of the human experience and a causal factor for all the experiences an individual may have of the world.[4]

Despite his subjective understanding of religion, Schleiermacher does not question the reality of the Divine. He argues that belief is not even necessary, but rather simply that the emotional experience of the Divine is the true essence of religion—it is surely not any sort of intellectual belief. Responding to Immanuel Kant, Schleiermacher argues that there is no such thing as natural religion, no general religion of all humanity: instead, stating that the only real religion is positive and revealed.[5]

Within this framework the intuition of the Divine is the absolute essence of religion. Emotion and sense constitute this connection to the infinite. The connection, made up of both intuition and feeling, is nothing without one or the other[6] A definition of the Divine is less important to Schleiermacher than the connection itself.

Community, the essential facilitator of these senses and emotions, fosters intuition and feeling; the religious community exists to inspire this sense and taste for the Divine.[7] At the same time, once there is intuition, one will necessarily share this with one's peers.[8] The inherently communal aspect of religion has implications for the possibilities of forming the connection. For example, revelations are a natural outgrowth of communal religiosity. Revelations are new perspectives of intuition that beckon newcomers into the fold of the religious, around which new groups of the faithful are formed.[9]

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[4] Ibid., p. 53.
[5] Ibid., p. 20.
[6] Ibid., p. 31.
[7] Ibid., p. 81.
[8] Ibid., p. 73.
[9] Ibid., p. 83.

Thirty-one years later, Schleiermacher holds a more prominent position in society and the church. He writes a work of systematic theology, The Christian Faith (1830). Here he proposes what he calls "absolute dependence," an awareness that one is not a self-caused being. Humans are always aware that there is something resides within us and there is a force that comes from without, but we know that the latter is more important and that we are dependent upon this.[10] He makes clear that this religiosity, this piety, is not an emotion, but a feeling: the consciousness of being absolutely dependent, or in relation with God.[11] Absolute dependence defines the connection between the Divine and humanity, one that all humans are capable of having, and constitutive of human consciousness.[12]

The feeling of absolute dependence is at its core the feeling of being aware of the Divine, a greater entity, and knowing that the Divine's existence, juxtaposed with our own finite existence, creates a relationship between the two. However, this is not the only impetus for this feeling. Schleiermacher understands our knowledge of our place within the world to be a co-determining stimulus. The feeling of absolute dependence is existential for Schleiermacher; he describes the notion as becoming aware of one's existence within a "universal nature-system."[13] This is a mounting consciousness of the self as a finite spirit, set against and within a far larger system of nature. The self-consciousness comes to encompass all of the "nature-system" as the human realizes that they have a place within the world of which they are apart, but are also over against it. This consciousness is not itself the feeling of absolute dependence, but rather a catalyst for the feeling.

> To be one with the world in self-consciousness is nothing else than being conscious that we are a living part of this whole; and this cannot possibly be a consciousness of

[10] Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Ltd., 1999), p. 13.
[11] Ibid., p. 17.
[12] Ibid., p. 12.
[13] Ibid., p. 138.

> absolute dependence; the more so that all living parts stand in reciprocal interaction with each other....The feeling of absolute dependence, accordingly, is not to be explained as an awareness of the world's existence, but only as an awareness of the existence of God, as the absolute undivided unity.[14]

The feeling of absolute dependence is clearly defined as an awareness of the existence of God in the human's self-consciousness. Yet, Schleiermacher's understanding of how this feeling may come into existence is based upon the development of the self-consciousness due to greater awareness of one's place in the world and one's interconnectedness with all other living entities in the world or through direct realization of the existence of the greater Divine. Thus, the awareness of God is possible only in the self-consciousness, and only in the self-consciousness that has been fully developed to have the capacity for such a feeling. God is an objective, outside reality that can stimulate the self-consciousness of the human mind in order that God may be experienced here.[15]

Given this foundation, Schleiermacher concludes that those within the Christian community who have not attained this feeling of absolute dependence must have some sort of unfinished or defective development.[16] Underlying this notion is Schleiermacher's assumption that all humans have an equal and universal capacity for the feeling of absolute dependence. The capacity for this feeling is not limited to those of the Christian faith, nor is it confined to any particular population; it is indicative of being human.

The feeling of absolute dependence is awakened by communication with the community. Even without speech, the inner feelings of a person may still be indicated by expressions, gestures, and vocal tones, thereby bringing about an outward show of a person's innermost personal feelings. These outer expressions are created by the inner experience, which can is then

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[14] Ibid., p. 132.
[15] Ibid., p. 134.
[16] Ibid.

communicated so that those near might experience it. Thereby, the communal arena may become yet another catalyst for the feeling of absolute dependence.[17] The juxtaposition of this communal, worldly aspect of religion with the theory of absolute dependence creates what Schleiermacher identifies as God-consciousness. The definition developed is the interaction of the feeling of absolute dependence with humanity's presence in the world, which creates feelings of pleasure and pain.[18]

[17] Ibid., p. 27.
[18] Ibid. p. 47

Chapter Two- Schleiermacher in Perspective

While Schleiermacher, in On Religion and The Christian Faith, has formulated a doctrine that aptly creates a viable theological and practical framework for Christianity, it remains deeply vulnerable to skeptics of religion. Atheists and agnostics alike may take in such a framework of intuition with understanding and yet be able to put it aside as incomplete, inappropriate, or even false. From a scientific camp, psychologists may see the same processes occurring, yet understand them in a different light, as part of the psychological workings of the human. The process of becoming aware of the Divine through feelings of reverence, smallness, or humility is clear. Having a sense and taste for the Divine—or later, a feeling of absolute dependence—is the essence of religion, the process by which ones makes a connection to the Divine. Schleiermacher develops a set of theories around this concept, which are theologically understandable and enabling for humans seeking to attain this greater relation.

While there may be much truth in Schleiermacher's account, it is not immune to other explanations that would reduce the religious experience to positive thinking and dreaming. It is unfortunately too easily set aside by other parsimonious accounts in this age of scientific questioning and empiricism. Schleiermacher, throughout both of his texts, describes the intuition of the Divine as having a sense and taste for the infinite. These states are feelings, created not only in experiences of connection with the Other, but in every facet of life. Feelings, sensations, even notions of the truth, are constantly changing, hardly ever being identical with what has been felt before. They are ambiguous and often indescribable. Yet they are also transient, flowing fluidly and constantly changing. Any feeling may originate from a variety of unknown sources, but remain influenced at all times by numerous, fresh, external factors. To attribute such a phenomenon to that which is fundamentally unknown and only upon this is especially

questionable. Schleiermacher holds that the feeling of absolute dependence is a feeling, that is, specifically, not an emotion. This suggests that such a notion would not be as transient as other feelings, or surely as emotions. However, this does not prove the feeling of absolute dependence to be not only universal, but unchanging, as he claims. Schleiermacher holds that once an individual has fully developed self-consciousness, they should have the capacity for the feeling of absolute dependence. Further, this feeling, once attained through the realization that one is not a self-caused being, or by becoming aware of the interconnectedness of the world and one's place within it, should not change. There should be no variance in whether or not this feeling is experienced or the degree to which it is felt. Once one attains such a feeling, there should be no change, no questioning. However, this simply does not hold up against the reality of the experiences of faith communities. Individuals may go through many faith crises *after* experiencing such a feeling of absolute dependence. The degree of the original faith, or the legitimacy of the prior feeling of absolute dependence could be called into question, yet, countless individuals have stories of being faithful persons earlier in life, only to later turn to atheism. The feeling of absolute dependence is not wholly without the characteristics of other feelings. It too is changeable and transient.

Explaining that a basis for these feelings of the Divine in the mind and imagination is inspiration from others does little to mollify the skeptics. Saying that these feelings for the Divine must at some point be fostered by a third party, another believer, makes the reality of the direct connection between humans and the Other no easier to defend. Social influence is a strong factor in all human decision making. To state that this must be a cause of true understanding of an Otherworldly realm without taking faulty or uninspired communication into account is difficult to say the least.

If religion truly is an intuition of the Divine, a connection with the Other—if it is a discipline which speaks to a realm unknown by all others—then the intuition left wholly susceptible to a psychological understanding is difficult for humans to experience. Such a conception seemingly leaves religion within the confines of what it proposes to transcend. If religion is necessarily an intuition of the Divine, a Divinity that is outside of the mind proper, there is an assumption that this intuition depends in part upon this Divinity. A conception of the connection, which is thoroughly applicable to psychological theories, an understanding that wholly relies upon psychological explanations, makes faith immensely challenging. A better, less vulnerable understanding of the connection to the Divine must be sought.

Schleiermacher After Freud

The modern reader of Schleiermacher's writings consumes them in light of to that which she has previously processed, as is the case with human analysis. A current reading of On Religion, and The Christian Faith by a Westerner undoubtedly comes from a perspective which is based upon, or biased by, society's conception of the mind. Whether the psychological workings of the brain or the more philosophical ideas about the mind, these pervade our thinking about how one has the capacity to think and interact with and within the world. In this day and age, the modern Western reader cannot help having been guided by the twentieth—century writings of Dr. Sigmund Freud. To a great extent, his teachings have been categorically debunked, put aside as faulty science based upon fabricated evidence. His methodology flawed, so were his conclusions. Freud believed that all human action was centered around sexual and base impulses as driving impulses. the vast majority of later psychologists have viewed this

preoccupation as far over exaggerated, giving further evidence to a lack of unbiased science on Freud's part.

Nonetheless Freud's influence upon modern day culture cannot be denied. His teachings, appear pervasively, not only within our everyday language, but also within our academic texts, as necessary material that must be known to claim competency in the scientific field of psychology.

The foundation for Sigmund Freud's admonitions toward religion came early on in life, out of his own personal history. Growing up in both Austria and what is now the Czech republic, his Jewish family was persecuted by neighbors and peers. Young Sigmund often heard the shouts of his classmates, "Juden heraus" (Jews, get out).[19] A the age of twelve he was also witness to a public mockery made of his father which went unquestioned by the elder. The youth wrote to his father in his adolescence of this incident with great concern, using a text and tone which was nothing but anti-Semitic.[20] While these early run-ins with religious intolerance speak volumes, this also led to an outright contempt for his father and his religious practice. There was a clear case of rebellion towards his inherited religion. Interestingly, out of Freud's own writings, any form of aggressive rebellion exhibited is based primarily in a negative emotional stance towards one's parents.[21]

Later in life, Freud's knowledge of his oppressed position had more of a direct affect upon his life path. As an accomplished physician, it would have been possible for him to attain a

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[19] Edward Erwin, ed. The Freud Encyclopedia, Theory, Therapy, and Culture. (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 295.
[20] Ibid., p. 296.
[21] Ibid.

title of "professor extraordinarius." Yet, a nonconverted Jew would be unable to be a "professor ordinarius, a full-time, salaried position with teaching responsibilities."[22]

On the topic of religion, Freud wrote four books, Totem and Taboo (1912), The Future of an Illusion (1927), Civilization and Its Discontents (1930), and Moses and Monotheism (1939). However, his first address of the subject came in an essay, *Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices* (1907), in which he begins to lay out his view of religion from an anthropological basis. This first essay sought to compare religious practices to the "compulsive, ritualistic behavior of the obsessive-compulsive neurotic."[23] However, most of his analyses dealt with an Oedipal-like understanding of men re-enacting their desire to conquer their fathers and take their mothers as their own through the religious practice. The killing and subsequent cannibalization was seen in the Christian ritual of Holy Communion.[24] As significant as these writings are in a context of evaluating religious experiences, other writings of Freud have become far more significant for the ways in which religion is perceived and believed.

At a cursory glance, Freud's teachings have given modern society a structure for considering the workings of the mind. Freud's proposal rests primarily upon his famous concepts of id, ego, and superego.[25] He describes these three elements as constituting the mind, working over against one another, yet still separate in a significant fashion. The id is the locale of the most basic drives and desires that a human being experiences. The organism's needs are felt here, manifested as a desire to reduce pain and tension. The id's impulse to change this state of discomfort is propelled by the desire to create pleasure, known as the *pleasure principle.*[26] This pleasure principle may be triggered because of a hunger for food, a want of sexual

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[22] Ibid., p. 295.
[23] Ibid., p. 296.
[24] Ibid.

gratification, loneliness, or fear. With the repeated desire to satisfy these needs, the mind comes to recognize and remember the object of the desire and to associate one with the other. In so doing, a memory, an image of the objective is created within the mind, called the *primary process.*[27] This allows the individual to realize the objective needed to satisfy the desire without going through a process of trial and error each time the impulse arises.

The *ego*, a higher and more dynamic system within the mind, serves to gratify the more complex and functional needs of the human. The id, while working to provide impulse for the release of energy towards gaining the most basic needs, will be unable to work out the system needed to attain more involved evolutionary goals[28] like "survival and reproduction."[29] The ego is governed by the *reality principle*, which "aims to postpone the discharge of energy until the actual object that will satisfy the need has been discovered or produced."[30] Thereby, this process works to regulate the difference between the inadequacies of the environment surrounding the individual, which is devoid of immediate gratification of all needs and desires, and the still-relevant needs that persist. The functional process at work for this goal is the *secondary principle*, working "to find or produce the object, that is, to bring it into existence... The secondary process consists of discovering or producing reality by means of a plan of action that has been developed through thought and reason."[31] This function then uses reason to accomplish the goal realized by the id, primary process, ego, and subsequently the reality principle. Upon recognition of the desired objective and suspended release of energy towards attainment of that goal, the secondary process functions to pursue the specific goal in question. While this process

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[25] Sigmund Freud, The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud. Edited by A. A. Brill. (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), pgs. 12-13.
[26] Calvin S. Hall, A Primer of Freudian Psychology. (New York: The New American Library, 1954), p. 22.
[27] Ibid., p. 25.
[28] Freud, The Basic Writings. p. 535.
[29] Hall, A Primer. p. 28.
[30] Ibid.

may involve searching for the entity chosen, as in hunting and gathering food to satisfy hunger, Freud finds that the secondary process may also involve the mind in the creation of the objective, i.e. the creation of imaginary friends for the lonely, ostracized youngster.

The third substructure in Freud's system works as the overarching mediator between the self and the world. Hereby, the *superego* takes on the role of the judicial branch. Serving as the moral manager, it takes account of the inner, personal impulses and desires of the individual and regulates them in regard to the moral code of the parents and that of the rest of society.[32] The assimilation of these other moral codes serves to turn outside influences upon the person into one's own internal authority.[33]

Freud's multi-part framework for the drive and impetus of action within the brain as laid out with the id, ego, and superego is juxtaposed with another three level system of consciousness. Freud posited that what the mind has knowledge of and concerns itself with is divided up into three categories of awareness. The area most obvious, the conscious, is the area of the mind which deals with what we are aware of at any particular moment. This is the locale of what would normally be called "thinking." Directly below this level of awareness lies the area of the preconscious. This storage area includes all knowledge that we are capable of recalling by way of intentional remembering. This may involve a vast store of data that we are not immediately and constantly aware of, but are able to access upon command. Further removed, is the largest subgroup in this system of Freud's, the subconscious. This area is not accessible to normal processing of which the individual is aware. Freud understood the mass of the workings of the brain to be analogous to an iceberg floating in the ocean, where the above water section appeared relatively small, as the conscious, while the vast majority, (typically

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[31] Ibid., p. 29.
[32] Ibid., p. 31.

ninety per cent) remained submerged, as the subconscious. This is understood to be the material for dreams and underlying emotions and feelings that are kept under wraps.

While it would be ridiculous to ascertain that the majority of society had a comprehensive grasp of these Freudian theories, it would be even more preposterous to claim that these theories had not thoroughly pervaded and influenced modern western culture. Numerous Freudian concepts and phrases are an integral part of the vernacular in the United States, while the essential concepts themselves can be seen underlying much of the understanding that the culture has of the mind. Stemming from the theories put forth from Dr. Sigmund Freud, there is a common conception that multiple layers of consciousness exist that are differentiated by our ability to access and be aware of them. There is a sense that we do not know all of our feelings, motives and drives, that we cannot have access to them. We are unsure of what is driving our actions, and further, that we are even capable of controlling these underlying feelings. In Freud's theories, there is great emphasis upon the self. Yet, the self is divided and separated into multiple layers in multiple systems of functioning. The place of most interest, the internal workings of the mind is the place of thinking and imagination, but at times, this is a place which is also unknown and uncontrolled by volitions of which we are aware. In this framework, there exists in the mind a great deal we don't know and can't have access to. Further, these same processes may create impulses for the thoughts we are aware of.

Freud fuels the skepticism with which Schleiermacher's theology is read. The mind, which is the node of connection for the intuition of the Divine in both On Religion and The Christian Faith, is a partitioned and stratified unit. Freudian psychology undermines the philosophical and theological underpinnings of Schleiermacher's position on humanity's connection to the infinite. Because the self, the mind, is compartmentalized into areas of which

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[33] Ibid.

we have differing degrees of awareness, one cannot be sure about the basis of given feelings. Freud's conception of the human desire to reduce tension and increase pleasure by way of obtaining a goal or objective that will bring about satisfaction includes the possibility that the secondary process will produce a "reality."[34] The basis of our notions and feelings cannot be ascertained with such an explanation. One cannot be sure from where feelings of absolute dependence or heartfelt reverence may be originating. Humans are simply unaware of that which is affecting them in this system, and this has influenced the lack of credibility our culture gives to our very own, personal feelings and experiences. What we feel may be because of an outer, environmental factor, or it may simply be a produced feeling to quell our own fears. Furthermore, because this psychological theory severely limits our access to that which is considered apart of oneself, namely the mind, there is little room for empirical study of these feelings and notions.

Thus, psychology is here serving to first cast great doubt upon what individuals feel they have known, but then also prohibit access to the study of these experiences. As such, a theological theory of intuiting the Divine is left hanging in the breeze. Individuals are not only unable to have any proof of the infinite, but their own feelings and experiences of the religious are seen with profound skepticism and uncertainty.

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[34] Hall. A Primer. p. 29.

Chapter Three- William James: Another Psychological Perspective

William James, a psychologist, provides a perspective from outside of the religious or strictly philosophical disciplines. He is most commonly known for having penned the first American textbook in psychology. After receiving an M.D. from Harvard he was eventually granted a position teaching there. Doing so, he would not delineate between psychology, physiology, and philosophy, yet he was firmly entrenched in the scientific mindset. Leading him elsewhere was his father, educated at Princeton Theological Seminary.[35] He had asked William to deal with the topic of religion at some point in his life and his lectures at Edinburgh in 1901-1902 were the fulfillment of that promise. Those same speeches turned into The Varieties of Religious Experience.[36]

James' background significantly guides his approach to religion. He approaches his writing with a scientific understanding, employing reason and looking for empirical evidence for his positions. His definition of religion exemplifies this take, characterizing it as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the Divine."[37] It is "the belief that there is an unseen order, and that our supreme good lies in harmoniously adjusting ourselves thereto."[38]

The reference to solitude in this definition must not go unnoticed, for this facet becomes imperative as James further extrapolates on his position. He writes of people's religious experiences when they are alone, feeling a presence, or feeling a command on their own. This argument surely comes out of his psychological training, driving him to look for the true experience, unmediated and pure. There is a desire to pull away the excess and find the root of

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[35] William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience. (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), p. v.
[36] Ibid., p. vii.
[37] Ibid., p. 36.
[38] Ibid., p. 61.

the matter, the essence to be analyzed. "Individuality is founded in feeling, and the recesses of feeling, the darker, blinder strata of character, are the only places in the world in which we catch real fact in the making, and directly perceive how events happen, and how work is actually done."[39] This focus is remarkably similar to Whitehead's attention upon solitariness as well. Whitehead remarks that, "The great religious conceptions which haunt the imaginations of civilized mankind are scenes of solitariness: Prometheus chained to his rock, Mahomet brooding in the desert, the meditations of the Buddha, the solitary Man on the Cross. It belongs to the depth of the religious spirit to have felt forsaken, even by God."[40] For both authors, the motivation seems to be the same; they see this solitude as being the environment in which the truest religiosity is experienced. While it may be more obvious that James, in doing so, is limiting the bounds of religious experiences in order that they may be more defendable as being authentic, this may be an underlying motivation for Whitehead as well. Creating these boundaries limits the motivation of the experience, preventing their basis from being social suggestion, possibly first originating in another individual with a distinct bias. James explains his argument for this emphasis, saying that it would be foolish to try and prevent the study of the private, for that is where the most real religious experiences are. James states that these realities are, "infinitely less hollow and abstract, as far as it goes, than a science which prides itself on taking no account of anything private at all."[41] Hereby, James questions the validity of any empirical position, which would negate the possibility of studying the very essence of that entity, even if it may not be verifiable.

Despite James' turning the discussion towards the individual, away from the broad views taken by Kant, he too speaks of universalism. "When we survey the whole field of religion, we

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[39] Ibid., p. 545.
[40] Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), p. 20.

find a great variety in the thoughts that have prevailed there; but the feelings on the one hand and the conduct on the other are almost always the same, for Stoic, Christian, and Buddhist saints are practically indistinguishable in their lives. The theories which Religion generates, being thus variable, are secondary; and if you wish to grasp her essence, you must look to the feelings and the conduct as being the more constant elements."[42] Thereby, the many various and individual experiences are seen to have a unifying theme, the feeling and conduct that comes forth. Yet, the validity of such experiences remains unaccounted for. The truth to this unifying experience is therefore seen in the fruits of this religiousness. The product of the practice may be the only evidence one is left with.[43]

James, upon surveying all sorts of religious practices, does find room for a universal theory of religion. They (1) show humans to be in a state of uneasiness because there is something wrong with us and (2) the solution is to be saved from the "wrongness" by making proper connection with the higher power(s).[44] Therefore, the connection between the Divine and man becomes the essence of religion for James as well as Schleiermacher. James clearly addresses this connection from a psychological standpoint, trying to explain what may be going on within the individual. Yet he attempts to remain responsible to the study of religion in doing so. He further extrapolates on his theory in finding that there is a subconscious self that serves as an intermediary, or a connecting point between the individual of "nature" and the "higher region," labeled as God within the Christian tradition.[45] The evidence of such a connection is found in the instinctive belief that "God is real since he produces real effects in nature."[46] This connection is very similar to that which is found in Martin Buber's concept of the reciprocal

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[41] James, The Varieties. p. 544.
[42] Ibid., p. 548.
[43] Ibid., p. 24.
[44] Ibid., p. 552.

relationship with God, "We and God have business with each other; and in opening ourselves to his influence our deepest destiny is fulfilled. The universe, as those parts of it which our personal being constitutes, takes a turn genuinely for the worse or for the better in proportion as each of us fulfills or evades God's demands."[47]

Much is to be taken from James' account. He orients the discussion towards a scientific inquiry into the true essence of religion, trying to scrape away what he claims are those unwieldy, less important parts. In doing so, James has brought about a focus upon the connection between man and the Other, seeing this to be facilitated in part by the subconscious. This explanation, while being true to his biological, physiological, and psychological training, makes way for the existence of a true, present, real God, acting within the world. Pointing the discussion in this way has caused a honing in on the individual, pulling away other confounding factors that might bias a determination of the true connection. James states that this study of the individual shows the truest form of religious experience and therefore must be the foundation for understanding this connection. Which, he declares, represents a state where each party must first open itself up to the other.

James and Freud On Religion

There are distinct parallels to be found between William James and Sigmund Freud. As psychologists, both seek to understand the workings of the mind, and they do so with some very similar fashions, but all in all, the attitude of approach is quite distinct. William James, steeped in a scientific background, having thorough training in biological sciences, is very concerned with following a scientific path, looking for possibilities for empiricism and responsible

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[45] Ibid., p. 557.
[46] Ibid., p. 561.

scholarship. On the other hand, the processes at work in the mind equally fascinate Freud, but he is far more willing to be philosophical about the process, theorizing whenever he can.

In the end, the conclusions that they draw become indicative of just how far apart they are in their approach to the subject of religion. James, whose father was a trained minister, had a deep respect for religion. This at no point meant that he would avoid the subject out of a kind of left-handed reverence. As asserted to Frances Morse, he believed that the life of religion was humankind's most important function.[48] The expenditure of James' effort towards this topic throughout his writing fully attests to this. It is interesting to note that Freud does not go without similar comments, stating that "religious ideas" "are perhaps the most important item in the psychical inventory of a civilization," yet he goes on to label these as, "its illusions."[49] Indeed, Freud was rather hostile to religion throughout his career, seeing it as an illusion produced by humans to deal with the helpless situation they find themselves in.[50]

The degree to which these psychologists held validity for personal feelings and experiences indicates another bifurcation in their writing. As seen in the previous analysis of The Varieties of Religious Experience, James holds the study of the individual, personal experiences with profound weight, seeing them as, "infinitely less hollow and abstract, as far as it goes, than a science which prides itself on taking no account of anything private at all."[51] Insight into the motivation for this book can be gleaned from comments he made prior to the Gifford Lectures. In a letter to Frances Morse on April 12th, 1900, he writes that,

> The problem I have set myself is a hard one: *first*, to defend (against all the prejudices of my "class") "experience" against "philosophy" as being the real backbone of the world's

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[47] Ibid., p. 561.
[48] Richard R. Niebuhr, "William James on Religious Experience." In The Cambridge Companion to William James, edited by Ruth Anna Putnam. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 218.
[49] Sigmund Freud, The Future of an Illusion. Edited by James Strachey. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1961), p. 18.
[50] Ibid., From commentary provided by editor James Strachey.
[51] James, The Varieties. p. 544.

> religious life—I mean prayer, guidance, all that sort of thing immediately and privately felt, as against high and noble general view of our destiny and the world's meaning...[52]

One is once again struck with the magnitude with which James approaches this study of religion. His is a momentous struggle. Yet, in contrast to Freud, James' recognition of the personal, inner feelings of the human and the validity he assigns to them is significant. Whereas Freud's system of understanding the mind makes little room for recognition of private, internal feelings as being legitimate and real, James understands these to be the purest, most real indications of the human experience.

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[52] William James, In Niebuhr Richard R. "William James on Religious Experience." The Cambridge Companion. p. 215.

Chapter Four: James's Pure Experience

While it is the case that The Varieties of Religious Experience did indeed come years after some of his other essays, including The Will to Believe, Pragmatism, and Essays in Radical Empiricism, it does make much sense to have these earlier essays dealt with after my former remarks on Varieties. Indeed, his talks at the Gifford Lectures on Natural Religion in Edinburgh do an excellent job of laying out his approach for examining religion, his doing so from a psychological perspective, and his interests and emphases. The book provides a broader understanding of James' thought, which helps immensely when evaluating his more specific essays that came before.

These foundational concepts play a major role in what is presented in James' essays included in Essays in Radical Empiricism. In his first two compositions, *Does Consciousness Exist?* and *A World of Pure Experience*, he delves deeper into the applications and theories behind his interest in the individual, personal experiences and feelings of humanity. He refers to such a strategy as *radical empiricism.* In such a system, as he has noted in Varieties, he vies for a strict adherence to scientific empiricism, which he believes is able to even surpass other hard sciences, as has been quoted above. This process "must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced."[53] He has provided strict guidelines for the inclusion and exclusion of elements for this realm of understanding passed entirely upon experience. This then therefore correlates all that may be considered to the *experiencer,* yet he would not allow for such a description because of the way in which he sees the subsequent relationship forming. He argues that this system is

[53] William James, "A World of Pure Experience." Radical Empiricism and A Pluralistic Universe. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), p. 42.

necessarily *radical* based upon the relations of all those things considered. James argues that, "*the relations that connect experiences must themselves be experienced relations, and any kind of relation experienced must be accounted as 'real' as anything else in the system.*"[54] Thus, James suggests that this system of radical empiricism involves all entities within in a web of connections, a series of relations. However, in such a system, not only are the relationships between entities significant for the identity of those things experienced, but the relationships also become a part of the experience. A thoroughly interwoven system is hereby the result. This groundwork laid, the details of James' theory can be explored.

While Freud conceptualized the mind to understand and interact with the world in a compartmentalized framework of consciousness, preconsciousness, and subconsciousness, James takes a far more simplified approach. As the title suggests, *Does 'Consciousness' Exist?*, questions the reality of such a structure or system in the human brain. While it is admitted that at first glance, such a query appears preposterous, for one consistently does have the experience of being aware of oneself, one's place in the environment, and one's thoughts on the subject, James asks whether one can conceptualize, or even think about consciousness itself. "The moment we try to fix out attention upon consciousness and to see *what,* distinctly, it is, it seems to vanish. It seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue..."[55] Thus, the actuality of an entity that is separate and different from the experience itself, commonly referred to as consciousness is hereby brought into question. If there is an entity that exists as consciousness, this should be able to be defined or deduced from something other than itself, yet how this can occur with the concept of consciousness is

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[54] Ibid., Italics are as found in original text.
[55] G. E. Moore, as found in: James, William. "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" Radical Empiricism and A Pluralistic Universe. (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), p. 7.

unknown.[56] At its center, there lies nothing more than the content of consciousness itself, that is, what is involved in the experience. Yet, returning to his concept of the relationality of radical empiricism, James argues that what is experienced, as an object to be perceived in one moment later becomes that which constitutes thinking. Only the latter, thinking, would normally be labeled as requiring consciousness. However, the basis of both moments is the same, the object. The only difference that has come about is indeed the relationship of the object to other entities within each moment of experience. That which makes up the experience has not changed, only the relative positions of them.[57] Can one then be referred to as something wholly different from the other, being called consciousness, while the other has no need of this entity to exist? Rather, experience undivided does not represent object and consciousness, but rather reality in two settings: in the mind and outside, as an object, in the realm of the known and the knower.[58] Thus, while this undivided experience does not do away with the subject/object duality entirely, it transforms the single content of experience into a situation of being viewed both subjectively and objectively.[59] This new understanding of experience, without consciousness is labeled *pure experience.* This system allows the single entity, reality, to be in two places, that is, in the world and in the mind, at once.[60] The reality changes places and identities entirely relative to its surroundings.

William James realizes that the theory he is proposing is not only wildly different from other forms of psychology, like that put forth by Sigmund Freud, but that because it is so atypical, it doesn't easily fit into our capacity to understand. He attempts to clarify himself by specifying the thesis he is working with. "The peculiarity of our experiences, that they not only

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[56] Paul Natorp: *Einleitung in die Psychologie*, 1888, pp. 14, 112. as found in James, William. "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" Radical Empiricism. p. 8.
[57] James, "Does 'Consciousness' Exist?" Radical Empiricism. p. 9.
[58] Ibid., p. 9-10.

are, but are known, which their 'conscious' quality is invoked to explain, is better explained by their relations—these relations themselves being experiences—to one another."[61] James understands that the term consciousness has been used to verbalize a concept of function that does occur within the mind. He does not see it as necessary though, for to use such a model is to add a layer upon that which already exists, instead of simply explicating the inherent qualities of experience itself. In analyzing the existing theory of the mind and experience, James speaks of *percepts*, seeking to account for all of the varied ways in which the mind works and the ways in which consciousness has been applied. Percepts are described as a "group of associates with which the non-perceptual experiences have relations and which, as a whole, they 'represent,' standing to them as thoughts to things."[62] Thus, percepts are those thoughts which the mind experiences that are apart from the thinking that occurs in the process of perceiving. Of course, perception participates in and forms the foundation for percepts, but the latter are indeed quite different. James finds that, "we are used to treating percepts as the sole genuine realities, and we tend to overlook the objectivity that lies in non-perceptual experiences by themselves."[63] There is a severe lack of credit given to these, for they are not directly linked to an outer, tangible reality. Therefore, "we treat them as wholly subjective—the stuff of the subconscious."[64] Yet, this does not hold with reason, for in and of themselves, they are experienced, and as such, do hold the right to be viewed as part of our own experience. In more common psychological understandings, precepts end up being counted as two different experiences, outside, in reality, as objects, and also again as a psychological occurrence within the mind. Thoughts are then treated as a subjective activity of the conscious in one, and again as an objective reality, content,

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[59] Ibid., p. 10.
[60] Ibid., p. 12.
[61] Ibid., p. 25.
[62] Ibid., p. 17.

outside the head.[65] As such, a strange dualism is created which does not simply separate entities, but transforms a single happening, an experience, into two separate factors.

James seeks to transcend this odd system with his theory of pure experience. He speaks of experience happening in this realm as an instant field of the present, it is, "plain, unqualified actuality, or existence, a simple *that*."[66] What may reside within this realm has been constricted by James' empirical parameters based upon experience; pure experience is made up of nothing more than that which is experienced.[67] Constituting this framework is an amalgam of simply real objects, events, feelings, and thoughts, which are ordered and organized by their relations to one another. The mind may serve to guide the individual through the course of these experiences, but it must be noted that herein, everything that is experienced, is indeed a reality. What does separate among these experiences, between those mental events and others, is along the lines, once again, of their relation to one another. While all within the system are regarded as actualities, there remain undisputable differences between that which occurs within the mind and that which is outside. James gives the examples of a perceived room in which one is sitting, versus one that is remembered, as well as a fire, which sits before one's body and one that is imagined. While the similarities among these are indeed remarkable, there are functional differences that must be recognized. These differences are essentially based upon the degree to which the fire "at one's feet" or "in one's mind" may be extended.[68] They may both be extinguished with water, bring a smile to one's face, or bring about other thoughts, yet the 'mental' fire may not have the capacity to warm the toes; it cannot be extended to the biological concerns of thwarting hypothermia. As James identifies, there are experiences, which affect

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid., p. 18.
[66] Ibid., p. 23.

their associates actively and therefore, their natures are assigned as attributes. These may affect both inner 'emotion' and outer 'value' in much the same way. Thereby, "experiences of painful objects are painful experiences" and "intuitions of the morally lofty are lofty intuitions."[69] The resulting validation of experiences and feelings that result from experiences hereby becomes quite poignant. James' pure experience allows not for everything to have validity, but does indeed give credibility to all that is truly experienced.

James and Freud On Consciousness

Freudian psychology understands the individual to have thoughts, feelings, emotions, and drives based upon multiple layers of varying awareness and consciousness in the mind. The philosophy leaves the human not knowing how she has come to feel as she does. She is told that her notions of reality may indeed be based upon a strange, dark well of boiling emotions and impulses called the subconscious, and that she has no real access to this pit. She cannot be certain that that which she experiences in her environment matches up in any direct or mannered way to that which she thinks or feels. She is however, quite likely to question all of these things, skeptical of how she has come to think, feel, or know as such.

James' pure experience allows for an entirely different sort of psychological understanding than that of Freud. James, throughout his writing, has given much credibility to the personal thoughts and feelings of the individual, seeing these as the purest, most real empirical data. As an empiricist at heart, he worked toward a thorough, full-fledged approach to deal with the most definitively empirical data that he could find. Being trained at length as a scientist in a number of fields, he had not only an affinity for the empirical but also for the

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[67] Ibid., p. 26-27.
[68] Ibid., p. 32.

scientific method. He turned these interests toward the field of religion with respect and scrutinizing analysis. What has resulted has been a justification of the religious experience using a method of *radical empiricism.* James used the scientific method, often used to dispute religious sentiments, to critique and negate the concept of consciousness in favor of a unified understanding of reality that causes a rethinking of prior psychological understandings. The lack of a true state of consciousness as a functioning entity within the mind breaks down barriers between the human and the Divine in such a manner that pure experience validates the religious experience.

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[69] Ibid. p. 34.

Chapter Five: Immanuel Kant

Much like Freud, Immanuel Kant's philosophy creates dualities, which make it impossible to verify feelings of intuiting the Divine. Both of these thinkers have influenced not only their own disciplines, but popular thinking as well. Kant's writings mark such a turning point in philosophy that one can see that which came before and that which came after as two different eras. While these two authors did not always speculate on exactly the same subjects and their backgrounds of philosophy and psychology were quite different, their writings tackle the same subject, the ability for human individuals to connect to the Divine.

Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason represents Kant's attempt to construct a model of religion, which would rise primarily out of schools of logic and philosophy as opposed to the Church. In doing so, Kant develops entirely new obstacles for his readers to tackle. From the outset, there is no possibility of knowing whether God exists, for God has been relegated the realm of the noumena, that which humans cannot know. This is made up of those things which are as they are, or may be, in themselves. Conversely, the phenomenal realm is made up of those things that are able to be perceived by the cognitive faculties of humans.[70]

This duality, while of great concern for the current discussion, works well for Kant's objectives. In contrast to Schleiermacher's position that religion is and serves the purpose of creating a connection to the Divine, Kant sees religion as a basis for ethics. An intuition arises again, now in Kant's plan for humanity coming to understand morality. He assumes that the

[70] This cursory explanation of Kant's phenomena-noumena duality is taken from Robert Merrihew Adams' discussion of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason in the introduction to Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). The former text should be consulted for further analysis. Kant, Immanuel. Critique of Pure Reason. (Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1990).

moral law can be found through reason, and it is this: (1) to act in accordance to a maxim that you are willing to adhere to as well and (2) never to treat persons as exclusive means to an end.[71]

Kant believes that such an ethic requires God to be postulated. God's grace justifies humans, enabling them to achieve the moral law.[72] Yet, this postulated God remains a part of the noumena, unknown to humans. However, once justified, humanity may attain the moral law, for each person has an innate sense of it.[73] The ethical community that is created by the collective positing of God then serves to support each member in this belief and the adherence to the ethical life, making the moral law feasible.[74]

Kant's philosophy presents humanity with an entirely different sort of connection to the Divine than Schleiermacher's. Kant represents the Divine, God, as being absolutely superior to humanity, giving knowledge and grace from which humans benefit. However, there is no sense of humans being able to have any sense of a relationship or connection with the Divine. The noumenal realm of God remains out of the grasp of humanity, unknown and unattainable.

While humans must posit God, God remains separate from people, out of reach. God does not enter into the phenomena, that with which humans may deal. Therefore, while it is necessary to postulate God, it is not necessary or even possible to know if God exists.

Kant In Perspective

While Freud's psychological philosophy seeks to understand the inner workings and functional structures of the mind, in the end, the outcome of this postulation for the psychology

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[71] Dr. Paul, class lecture, 9 September, 2001 in Nineteenth Century Religious Thought at Gustavus. Further reading on the subject is found in Kant's Critique of Practical Reason, section VII. Kant, Immanuel. Critique of Practical Reason. (Amhherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1996).

[72] Kant, Immanuel. Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6:62.

[73] Ibid., 6:44.

[74] Ibid., 6:72.

of religion is quite similar to the writings put forth by Immanuel Kant. Freud's understanding of the ways in which humans think and feel has meant that individuals cannot be assured as to the reality or basis of that which they experience. This is especially so when applied to abstract feelings of intuition of the infinite. Such notions are more likely chalked up to implications of the myriad drives and impulses at work within the subconscious. Such an explication not only denies the likelihood of a Divine entity, but calls into question the basis of *anything* felt or experienced.

While Kant was less hostile to the idea of religion as a whole, his philosophy makes a connection to the Divine no less plausible. In fact, any intuition, connection, or knowledge of the Divine is entirely out of the question within Kant's framework. There is no possible access to the noumena for humans, for it is necessarily that which we cannot know. Therefore, there can be no religious experience that participated in some feeling of or connection to the Divine that can be construed as having anything to do with actuality.

William James' writings provide an exciting alternative to the roadblocks, which are created by the philosophies of Sigmund Freud and Immanuel Kant. While he sets out with a strong appreciation and reverence of religion, highly valuing the personal, individual religious experience, his understanding of the consciousness and subsequently, pure experience, grants a new avenue for understanding the intuition of the Divine. The feelings and notions that constitute such a religious experience, whatever it may be, hold validity in James' eyes. Yet, this is not the case simply from a religious point of view, for they surely would hold validity for Schleiermacher as well, from his religious background and interests. Pure experience grants justification for such experiences based upon objectivity and empirical interests. With such an understanding, the religious experience, people's intuition of the Divine cannot simply be

relegated to the position of fantastical imaginings or illusions based upon fears and social concerns, as Freud would posit. These experiences can also not simply be set aside as peripheral experiences that have no real justification because they are outside of pure reason.[75] Instead, because *it is* experienced, it must be held as valid, but even further, it must be participating in actuality.

[75] Kant. Religion. 8:143.

Chapter Six: Nishida Kitaro and Pure Experience

Nishida Kitaro has also written on the concept of pure experience, but from a very different perspective. While William James is a scientist, extremely concerned with taking an empirical approach while working and writing as a psychologist, Nishida is working from the other side of our coin, as a religious philosopher. He comes from the Buddhist tradition, which has formed the basis for his writings on pure experience, its roots being an integral aspect of Buddhist philosophy. It is quite significant that both James and Nishida work with the concept of pure experience, opening up a new way of seeing the religious experience, and seeing validity for an intuition of the Divine, depicting the East and West, Christianity and Buddhism, as well as psychology and religion.[76]

Nishida Kitaro's understanding of humans, the world, and the way in which they interact is wholly different from a Western understanding. Nishida's conceptualizations are founded upon a unified understanding of reality and the ways to which it can be related. However, the Kantian understanding, formative for Western thought, is full of duality, separating parts of the world and the world from the knower.

Nishida's concept of pure experience is based upon the idea of a unified reality to which the human mind can connect directly. There is no separation between the world and the self; all is unified. This idea, refers to a state of experience which is absolute and of the moment. Pure

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[76] Nishida Kitaro's philosophy, as much as it is based upon the idea of "*junsui keiken,*" or pure experience, is actually borrowed directly from the writings of the previously discussed, William James. Having the same label, the concepts each dealt with were similar as well. The former described *junsui keiken,* "a truly pure experience has no meaning whatsoever; it is simply a present consciousness of facts just as they are." William James explained his concept as, "plain, unqualified actuality, or existence, a simple *that.*" While these explanations show the ideas to be strikingly similar, the extrapolated writings went on to become rather divergent. James did not question the basic metaphysical facets of the Western world- time, space, and being. Nishida went further, making his conceptualization of "pure experience" a more all-encompassing theory that was also more radical. However, my interest in pure experience lies in areas where both philosophers are in agreement and I will therefore not explore this divergence here.

experience exists in a realm prior to what westerners usually think of as thought, or even consciousness.

Immanuel Kant, great philosopher of the 18th century, greatly redefined religious and philosophical thought that had come prior and greatly influenced the thinking that proceeded. His understandings of the world still have a profound affect upon thinking done in these fields. Most importantly, Kant's contribution has had to do with the dualities that have permeated his analysis of life and humanity's role within. This has progressed and also hindered philosophical thought, creating new avenues for understanding as well as roadblocks others needed to transverse.

The duality in Kant's thought can be understood from more than one perspective. He has seen the human mind as a passive entity, simply receiving the impressions and sensations of its external environment. It stands separate from that which one may sense. The mind and its realm are separated into object and subject, respectively. This duality yet leads into another separation, for which he is most famous, the concepts of the phenomenal and the noumenal. The phenomenal world is that which the self may know, may have direct relationship with, even though the mind still passively receives the input from this realm, while also guiding and giving order to experience. Herein, the self is subjected to the nature and laws of this state, working within and in direct contact. Converse to this state is that of the noumenal. That which we necessarily cannot know, of which we can have no direct knowledge, constitutes this realm. This is the realm to which God, morality, and virtue have been relegated. There is no direct understanding of these concepts, only inclinations and intuitions.[77] Thus, Kant's duality, based

[77] This cursory explanation of Kant's phenomena-noumena duality is taken from Robert Merrihew Adams' discussion of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason in the introduction to Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. The former text should be consulted for further analysis. Kant, Immanuel. Critique of Pure Reason. Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books, 1990.

upon the formulation of what humans can know and experience breaks down into multiple perspectives, from that of the mind and from that which is to be known. The basis for rationality within Kant's framework resides within the consciousness, that is, separate from the rest of our sensations and removed from the concrete, phenomenal world in which we live.

Quite different from Kant, Kitaro Nishida is a Japanese philosopher coming from an Eastern perspective with a solid understanding of Western philosophy. Living about a century after Immanuel Kant, Nishida grappled with the difficulties and roadblocks that his predecessor formulated. The dualities that were foundational for the philosophical construction of Kant's thought are in direct opposition to the Eastern tradition, which looks for a more unified understanding of the world. Nishida describes the concept of direct or pure experience This concept is described as a way of being conscious, aware, that has parallels to a psychological explanation. "The moment of seeing a color or hearing a sound, for example, is prior not only to the thought that the color or sound is the activity of an external object or that one is sensing it, but also to the judgement of what the color or sound might be."[78] From a cognitive psychology perspective, this could be described as simple sensation before perception had occurred. There is no thought, no mental construction taking place to describe or analyze the experience, but rather, simple, plain sensation occurs.

In contrast to Kant, the mind is not set apart from the world, bur rather connects directly with the environment, much as a mirror precisely reflects the object in front of it with its image. Nishida himself uses a psychological perspective to describe such a way of seeing the world. Using Willhelm Wundt's analysis of "mediate experience," Nishida notes how other forms of

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Further information for this discussion comes from William Turner, in his explication of Kant in the handout distributed in class as well as the lecture given by Dr. John Cha on February 21st.

science may actually not be studying true experience, but rather, a study of studying the experienced.[79] There is striking similarity here to James' lack of satisfaction with *normal empricism*, for he too felt that the scientific method did not allow for the most basic, purest experiences to be evaluated. Nishida says that anything outside of intuition, the pure experience, cannot be objective.[80] This strikes at the heart of Kant's philosophy of the assumption-based noumena and phenomena, which cannot be as objective as the direct intuition seen by Nishida.[81]

In opposition to Kant, Nishida assumes that all of reality is unified, unfolding in time.[82] Here Nishida moves past William James' conceptualization of pure experience. Nishida seeks to incorporate all of the world, including the mind's consciousness, into a single, unified understanding that described the totality of all things, whereas James simply applied this idea to the true state of the mind, a kind of absolute consciousness.[83] Assumptions and distortions released, the individual is then able to experience absolutely. Pure objectivity is attained and the experience is the thing in itself.[84] This reality, according to Nishida, is exactly where God may be experienced.[85]

In the experience of this reality, there is no thought, no mental constructions. In such an experience, meaning that is overlaid on pure experience serves only to dilute and change what is absolutely experienced. This does not mean that thought is outside the realm of pure experience; Nishida believes that the state of pure experience cannot be left.[86] Indeed,

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[78] Nishida Kitaro, An Inquiry Into the Good. Translated by Masao Abe and Christopher Ives. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 3.
[79] Ibid., p. 4.
[80] Ibid., p. 49.
[81] Ibid., p. 43.
[82] James W. Heisig, Philosophers of Nothingness. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), P. 42.
[83] Ibid., p. 45.
[84] Nishida, An Inquiry, p. 48.
[85] Ibid., p. 81. Nishida actually goes further at this point to say that God *is* reality. However, this shall not be addressed in this text, for the theological understanding of who or what God is actually, is not of primary concern. Rather, the possibilities for human connection to God, the Divine,is the heart of the matter in this paper.
[86] Nishida, An Inquiry. p. 4.

thought itself can makeup the pure experience of an individual in a moment in time. Yet this thought in and of itself lacks valuation and prejudice.[87] While pure experience exists temporally, unfolding in time, but can be experienced only in the moment, this does not prevent the particular moment in time from having connections to other moments and to history. The pure experience of the moment may comprise thoughts be made up of thoughts that are occurring and held at that point in time, yet the basis and understanding of those thoughts may come from what has passed before.[88] That is to say, the pure experience may be constructed out of past experience because of the mind's ability to remember and connect events and moments. Thus, the individual moment of pure experience may be constructed upon the basis of past thoughts and recreations, yet the actual moment is not a re-creation itself, but unique and definable in and of itself. The pure experience is prior to any meaning that could be attached to the immediate experience, but the pure experience itself could be made up of thoughts of meaning.

Pure experience may be voided and negated if a person leaves the point of the single, unique moment. It is this which defines and constructs the boundaries of the pure experience. While the individual moment, that of pure experience, may be founded upon earlier thoughts and ideas, pure experience can only be made up of this individual moment. To overstep this boundary is to leave the state of pure experience. One must remain within the consciousness of present, of the moment. To connect to other consciousnesses, that of the past or the future, takes the mind out of the primary, present consciousness. When one is not fully present in the unique, momentary state of consciousness, pure experience no longer exists.[89]

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[87] Heisig, Philosophers. p. 45. Thinking may occur, but the thoughts should not attach the mind to other, further removed thoughts, as would occur if thoughts are biased or pointed.
[88] Nishida, An Inquiry. p. 5.
[89] Ibid., p. 10.

The language of this concept is fundamental to its expression and understanding. Nishida runs into difficulty with the Western world view and the framework of its language when trying to express the idea of pure experience. Kant's duality is entrenched in the English language, leaving Nishida without the proper tools to convey his philosophy. Kant's understanding of the mind does "include an active process of constructing order via categories."[90] It is primarily a passive element being struck with impressions and sensations from the outside, separate world, which hinges upon a dualism of subject and object. This is in direct contradiction to Nishida's sense of a unified reality. Language clearly directs and even confines our understanding when we look at the possible ways of expressing experience. We have no grammatical phrases with which to escape the duality that Kant proposed. There is always an element of *someone* experiencing *something*.[91] Yet, to express pure experience linguistically, there must be another format. There must be an element of "direct seeing of the facts just as they are."[92] The concept of seeing the unified whole of reality must be translated to the reader. James Heisig suggests, "it was experienced," or "I experienced."[93] These expressions are not trapped in the subject-object wording of experience.

Nishida Kitaro's understanding of pure experience is based upon the idea of a unified reality that lacks the dualism present in Kantian and Western philosophy. Pure experience connects the human to the world in the individual moment of experience. Such a state of consciousness is prior to thought and meaning that would be attached to the immediate experience in a less pure state of being. However, this does not prevent thought from being involved with the immediate pure experience. Thought may constitute the momentary pure

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[90] Dr. Cha, corrective note. 28 March, 2002.
[91] Ibid., p. 45.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

experience, but the thought must remain within the present consciousness and not integrate past or future consciousnesses. Past consciousness may lead to the formation of thought which give possibility for the construction of a perspective that the current experience is viewed from. Yet, if the current thought bends into the past to ponder that which occurred prior, there is no longer full participation in the present and pure experience is lost. Pure experience, rather strange to Western philosophy, vies for a state of consciousness, which maintains absolute participation and connection to the immediate world, creating no separations or schisms, but instead seeing the true reality of all.

Chapter Seven: Implications

Eminent thinkers have had a profound affect upon public sentiment and thinking beyond the boundaries of their disciplines. However much Freud's work has been disliked, discredited, and proven inadequate and even unhelpful, Western culture has been saturated with the influence of Freud's psychotherapy and his philosophies. Freud's work has shaped the public's thinking on the mind, our understanding of the world, and the origin and validity of our feelings and emotions. Similarly, Immanuel Kant has influenced thinking within and beyond religious philosophy. His writings have affected the way that society views the capacity of the mind to relate to the world and to the infinite. They have also had an impact upon Western culture's understanding of what constitutes rational thought and what may be included as appropriate reason.

In the past, the church had a firmer grip upon the thinking of the culture. The Enlightenment transformed the basis and control of knowledge and thought. Science has changed the way people think and what they regard as true. Thinkers like Immanuel Kant and Sigmund Freud inspired questioning and skepticism about the possibility and justification of notions such as the intuition of the Divine. The theology of Friedrich Schleiermacher, which gave pride of place to *feelings*, especially that of "absolute dependence," has been consigned to the theological. Outside of this discipline, such a notion is viewed with brow raised, and may hold little water for those not already disposed to value religious sentiments.

The concept of pure experience—whether seeing the true reality of all, or coming to experience actuality—re-opens a serious conversation about the intuition of the Divine. The fact that this concept, used by both William James and Nishida Kitaro, has emerged from two vastly

different traditions only gives it more credence as a conversation point between the various fields represented.

Attacks on the validity of intuitions have come from the psychology camp, in the often hostile writings of Sigmund Freud. Yet the fact that William James, a formidable psychologist himself, produced a strong counter-argument out of the same discipline and tradition suggests that religious experience may find interested investigators there, too. Likewise, Immanuel Kant posited his arguments against the connection of humans to the Divine from a philosophical stance, using reason to dispute the claims of credibility that religion offered. Yet, Nishida, also a philosopher, has offered an understanding that in many ways directly contradicts the separations that Kant suggests are necessary. Further, James' emphasis on empiricism and the scientific method resonates with Kant's emphasis on rationality.

Further boundaries are transcended with the cultural and religious variation that James and Nishida bring to the opening of pure experience. James, a Western Christian, represents a religious tradition that speaks of the Divine as God, a personified entity existing over and above humans. Nishida's Buddhist heritage, thoroughly Eastern, refers to the Divine as Buddha and understands reality through a deconstructive process. Despite the differences in perspective, both of these writers have found great truth in pure experience.

The intuition of the Divine, spoken of as such, and understood in much the same way Schleiermacher understood it, does not belong to any particular religious tradition. The language used may vary, but at its core lies the idea that an individual human forms a connection with the Divine. This sort of experience becomes plausible, believable as entirely unique, when seen through the lens of pure experience.[94] It must be made clear that this does not suggest that the concept of pure experience creates a wholly different religious experience for humans to partake

in, but rather that the religious experience becomes a justifiable, real aspect of not only the "religious" life, but of life in its entirety, open to analysis from numerous perspectives, disciplines, and traditions. It is not a matter of transforming or negating Schleiermacher's philosophy, including the feeling of absolute dependence. Rather, the "intuition of the Divine" is validated, and with it, a possible new basis for understanding.

Pure experience opens up an avenue for theologians and religious scholars to speak of religious experiences that may engage the interests and respond to the skepticism of science and reason. On the flip side, psychologists may be able to investigate the religious experiences of humanity, which are such a profound part of the human condition, as a verifiable part of reality. The empiricism of William James opens up the possibility that religious experiences, specifically, the intuition of the Divine, might be studied from a psychological perspective.

Chapter Eight: Psychological Research

As laid out, the religious experience is a component of the human condition, often comprising some of the most profound events of a person's life. In popular culture, theories about connecting to the Divine and the like belong to the religious sphere, itself which is seen with skepticism at the least. This paper has not attempted to stake any claims as to the reality of the Divine, but rather to argue that religious experiences are an important and valid part of humanity. These experiences do not fall solely into the realm of philosophy or theology. As an essential and valid component of the human condition they must be open to evaluation from a variety of perspectives—including psychology.

"Pure experience" has validated the religious experience, including that of intuition of the Divine. This experience of the human has therefore become open to psychological evaluation. The psychological study that follows shows the direct implications of this text. The theories aforementioned have been applied to create a study of the religious *experience.* Emphasis has been placed upon strict empiricism, the content of experience, and avoiding dualism. This addition to the text concretely portrays the possibilities resulting from this bridge of psychology and religion.

INTUITION OF THE DIVINE- A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF RELIGIOUS MOTIVATION

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Abstract

Intuition of the Divine, defined as perceiving the presence of the Divine, is to be seen as the essence of religion. The motivational force, and therefore the type of experience that draws humanity to religion may be existential concerns, as Daniel C. Batson has proposed with his work on the Quest scale. Allport and Ross had gone another way, suggesting that religiosity be measured in terms of whether it was used as a means or an end, describing this as extrinsic or intrinsic, respectively, on their Religious Orientation scale. The current study seeks to further develop an instrument to evaluate religious experience. Experiences involving ritual and music or social influences by way of suggestion may better facilitate perception of the Divine, but the author believes that mysterious coincidences are more likely to be the primary motivation. Undergraduate students, ages 17 to 22, at Gustavus Adolphus College, will participate in experiences of ritual and music, existential concern, social suggestion, and mysterious coincidence. Students will be chosen through convenience sampling. A within-subjects design with 30 students will be used, and a questionnaire of perception of the Divine will follow each experience.

Intuition of the Divine- A Psychological Study of Religious Motivation

The sub-field of the psychology of religion is one from which a vast amount of research has come. However, the limitations imposed by dualistic philosophies have affected the avenues and objectives of such research. Researchers have avoided studying the actual religious experience and have been preoccupied instead with more peripheral issues in the field (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1982).

Allport and Ross (1967) sought to examine the role of religious practice in individual's lives. They developed The Religious Orientation Scale in order to evaluate quantitatively whether religion was being used as a means or an end. This theory was a revamping of prior research completed by Gordon Allport (1950), which had viewed religiosity as mature or immature. The scale places subjects on a spectrum of their "use" of religion. Individuals participating in religious practice in order to bring about other objectives, treating religion as a utility, are positioned on the "extrinsic" end (means), while those who seem to internalize religious beliefs practice "intrinsic[ly]" (end).

Using the popular extrinsic/intrinsic Religious Orientation Scale as a foundation, C. Daniel Batson sought to develop another factor for assessing religiosity. He believed that the "critical, open-ended approach to existential questions" was an essential factor in assessing religiosity (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis 1993, 166). This evaluation, labeled the Quest Scale, looks for individual's grappling with existential questions as an inherent part of their transcendent quest for answers. Whether or not answers are found and whether a transcendent truth is postulated is not important (Batson et al, 1993).

These studies do not look at the religious experience itself, especially one understood as an intuition of the Divine. The following study seeks to evaluate the facilitators and possible motivation behind the individual's specific religious experience.

A person's behavior and thinking in a particular situation is material for empirical research in psychological. The religious experience should not be an exception. Based on the writings of William James, Friedrich Schleiermacher, and C. Daniel Batson, among others, 24 elements of the religious experience as an intuition of the Divine have been compiled. This intuition, as it has been used throughout the paper, denotes a connection formed with the Divine. This connection may take various forms: mental, physical, or spiritual. This definition would be to include what is found under Schleiermacher's theory of absolute dependence (Schleiermacher, 1999). The concept is also not meant to be limited to any one religious tradition or cultural understanding. On the contrary, the 24 elements have been selected to include the experiences of as many individuals as possible. Thereby, the "intuition of the Divine," as defined, *may* be a universal foundation for all true religion.[95]

The study attempts to use these criteria quantitatively to evaluate people's religious experiences. The criteria were developed out of four general categories that the author believes comprise the experience of intuition: the sense of the Divine, a feeling of presence, an intuition of the Divine, and existential questioning. These four categories helped to generate more specific factors within each:

Sense of the Divine:
- -overwhelming feeling
- -sense of awe
- -mystery
- -sense of self within the world

[95] Emphasis in this sentence is upon the work "may." The argument in this paper does not address the profundity of the phrase, "intuition of the Divine," nor does it set out to speak to the ramifications that it could possibly have. The text here is simply meant to give light to the breadth and placement implied with the phrase. Thanks go to Dr. Paul, who dissuaded me from making this a priority in the thesis.

-sense of the Divine
-taste of the Divine

A feeling of presence: -feeling of presence
-feeling of closeness
-feeling of the moment
-feeling of the experience resonating with
-mind
-body
-spirit
-feeling you're not alone
-feeling of limitlessness
-feeling of Otherworldly interaction
-thoughts of the Divine
-thinking about a sacred presence
-feeling of chills

Intuition of the Divine:-feeling of transcendence
-thoughts of time and space
-sense of interaction between things
-sense of connection between things

Existentialism: -questioning your own purpose
-thinking about what meaning life has
-thinking about one's place in the world

These numerous factors provided the details that formulated the *Experience Questionnaire* (Appendix B).

While the proposed criteria are based primarily on the writings of the aforementioned authors, a preliminary study was also completed to determine whether their theories corresponded with the experiences of "real people." Random calls made in November, 2001, to numbers with area code 507 (and first three digits 933, placing the majority of calls to members of the Gustavus Adolphus community) found that feelings of intuiting the Divine were felt in settings of worship, nature, when connecting with other humans, when involved with music in individual and communal settings, when praying, and when in experiences of existential questioning. Combining these results with the writings mentioned, four motivating factors were chosen for evaluation: music, existential concern, social suggestion, and mysterious coincidence.

Participants will partake in four experiences. Each session will be held on a different day. Following each, participants will fill out the experience questionnaire. The first, that of mysterious coincidences, will involve the viewing of the opening scenes of "Magnolia," a mainstream Hollywood film. These scenes include very strange happenings that make explanation difficult. The second experience, existential questioning, will require that participants comple four sentences:

1. When I am trying to decide whether to do something that may be morally wrong...
2. When I consider my own death...
3. When questions about the purpose of my life arise...
4. When I think about my place with within the universe...

The third experience, ritual and music, will consist of walking down the aisle of Christ Chapel, Gustavus Adolphus College, while listening to classical music being played on the piano. The fourth experience, social suggestion, will involve the reading of a section from a testimonial-type book, The Resurrection Factor, by Joshua McDowell.

Appendix A

Background Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?
   A) Male B) Female

2. What is your age?

3. What was the size of the town/city in which you grew up?
   A) 0-5,000 B) 5,000- 15,000 C)15,000- 50,000 D)50,000K-100,000 E) Over 100,000

4. What is the approximate annual income of your family?
   A) 0-30,000 B) 30,000- 50,000 C) 50,000-75,000 D)75K- 100K E) Over 100K

6. Where do you worship?

7. What is the religious affiliation of your parent(s)?
   A) None B) Christian (Please specify denomination) _____
   C) Buddhist D) Hindu E) Islam F) Native American G) Taoist H) Confucius
   I) Other (Please specify)_____

8. Where do you believe that your parents have felt a sense of the Divine?

9. What is your religious affiliation?
   A) None B) Christian (Please specify denomination) _____
   C) Buddhist D) Hindu E) Islam F) Native American G) Taoist H) Confucius
   I) Other (Please specify)_____

10. Where have you felt a sense of the Divine?

11. In a given month, how often do you participate in religious activities with others?
    A) None B) 1 C) 2 D) 3-4 E) 5-6 F) 7 +

12. In what ways do you experience communication with the Divine?

13. In a given week, how often do you engage in prayer/meditation/etc.?
    A) None B) 1-3 C) 4-6 D) 7-11 E) 12-14 F) 15 +

14. Where do you believe your peers have felt a sense of the Divine?

Appendix B

Experience Questionnaire

Please respond to the questions in this form as to the experience you've just had.

1. I had an overwhelming feeling.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
2. I had thoughts of time and space.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
3. I did not feel chills in my body.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
4. The experience resonated with my body.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
5. I thought about my place in the world.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
6. I had a sense of awe.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
7. I had a feeling of presence.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
8. I had a sense of connection between things.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
9. I had a sense of mystery.
   strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
10. I had a feeling of "being in the moment."
    strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
11. I thought about the meaning of life.
    strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
12. I had a feeling of transcendence.
    strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree
13. The experience resonated with my mind.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

14. I had a sense of the Divine.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

15. I had the feeling that I was alone.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

16. There seemed to be a sense of interaction between things.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

17. I found myself questioning my purpose in life.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

18. Thoughts of the Divine crossed my mind.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

19. I had a taste of the Divine.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

20. I had a feeling of closeness.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

21. I found myself thinking about a sacred presence.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

22. I had a feeling of limitlessness.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

23. I had a sense of self within the world.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

23. The experience resonated with my spirit.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

24. I had a feeling of Other-worldly interaction.

strongly agree 1 2 3 4 5 strongly disagree

Appendix C

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

This study is an examination of the ways in which various situations affect an individual's experience and perceptions of their environment. You will be asked about your thoughts and feelings following the various experiences in which you partake. There will be four meetings, each lasting no more than 15 minutes.

All material will be kept strictly confidential and your anonymity preserved by having a participant code number, rather than your name, attached to all documents used throughout the study (except this consent form). Your participation in this study is completely voluntary - you are free to stop at any time and to leave out any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering. At the end of the study, the experimenter will provide a more thorough overview of the study and answer any questions that come up during the process.

Concerns about any aspect of this study may be referred to the experimenter, Joshua D. Rinas or to the faculty advisor of this research, Dr. Mark Kruger. If you agree to participate in this study, please read the following sentence and sign on the line indicated below.

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this research as it has been described to me.

SIGNATURE

_____ _____

(Experimental Participant) (Experimenter – J. D. Rinas)

DATE

_____

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