

**PASSION AND PATHOLOGY IN TERESA OF AVILA'S
MYSTICAL TRANSFORMATION**

**With Reference to the Transpersonal Theories of
Michael Washburn**

A dissertation by Donald Blais, OCDS, ThD

Submitted to the Faculty of Regis College
and the Pastoral Department of Toronto School of Theology.
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Doctor of Theology Degree
awarded by
Regis College and University of Toronto

Submitted August 1, 1997
Defended October 16, 1997
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Psychohistory and psychotheology have generated numerous, *highly speculative* and *possibly dubious* retrospective psychoanalyses of religious personages. (Among those singled out, is the sixteenth century contemplative, theologian and doctor of the Church, Teresa of Avila.) In superimposing interpretive meanings and Freudian oedipal mythology upon these historical figures, religious experience is subjected to reductionism. Thus, non-*normal* devotion is seen as having to represent unresolved parent-child relational issues.

This dissertation represents a departure from the status quo. The present study is concerned with the psychological *dynamics* -- the *mechanics* -- of mystical transformation as recorded in the works of Teresa of Avila. In particular, the dissertation focuses upon the collective phenomenon of *mystical madness* -- both to its exaltative and pathological types, breakthrough and breakdown, as well as the real risks involved in transformation. Recourse, therefore, is made to the transpersonal theories of Michael Washburn for purposes of comparison and contradistinction. This, together with scriptural, mystical and period contextualization of Teresian notions, allow for a fuller appreciation of the psychological accommodation to divine influx required on the part of the Christian mystic.

Yet, refusing to reduce mystical experience to psychological aspects, the thesis addresses the involvement of grace in mystical encounter, thereby raising and answering the following theological questions: 1. Theologically, what is *holy madness* (a term employed by Teresa in various contexts)? 2. Is the state of mystical union with God/Christ characterized by a sort of *holy madness*? 3. How should we as Christian theologians classify the phenomena which collectively comprise *holy madness*? 4. What does *holy madness* say of God? Is God simply the Source of *holy madness*, or is *madness* the nature of God? And finally, 5. Are Christians universally called to *holy madness*?

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is consecrated to Mary, Theotokos,
who in faith and virginity
was mystically ravished by the Spirit of God
and conceived, in the violent abrogation of the rules of nature,
our Redeemer and God, Jesus Christ;
to Teresa, my foundress and companion,
whose heart, when enraptured,
was pierced by
the penetrating and maddening Love
of this same Jesus, her Lover and Beloved;
to all of the mad visionaries and holy fools
whose grace has flowed
from the cup
of Jesus, King of Folly;
and to my grandfather and grandmother spirits
who guide and protect me:
Gerald, Scholastique and Juliette.

PREFACE

God is *la prima dolce Verita* (gentle first Truth) as well as *pazzo d'amore* (mad with love) and *essa carita* (charity itself).¹

There is a danger when discussing mystical topics. Frankly, it is to treat the phenomena associated with mysticism, at best as *relics* of the *past*, at worse *aberrations* or *oddities* thankfully confined to *previous* ages. The key modifiers here are *past* or *previous*. For me, as my spiritual life has been formed in the Discalced Carmel, mystical theology is not a walk down memory lane or rumination in a museum. Openness to mysticism defines the Carmelite tradition. Today, here and now. Taking Paul out of context, "Now is the time, this is the day of salvation." (2 Cor 6:2)

I have chosen this dissertation topic because I want to address some *insider* issues among contemporary mystics with whom I am familiar. I spoke with several who believe that my work is crucial, although one admitted that she hoped God would not encounter her in quite the same fashion as I will be describing Teresa of Avila's encounters. This tertiary Sister confessed that "God always comes to me in a gentle way. ...I don't know how I would handle it if He did otherwise." After which, this Sister added that she has suffered in abusive relationships with other human persons and thought that she might misinterpret God's passion and forcefulness through the filters of previous injuries. Note however, she was aware of God as having passion and forcefulness,

¹ Martha Grace Reese, "Saint Catherine of Sienna: The Way of Mystic Madness," *Religious Traditions* 11 (Spring 1988): 45.

but not displayed in relationship to her. I hope, at least intellectually -- if not more so directed to the heart -- to show that God's intensity is constructive, an intensity some find quite liberating or at least challenging.

Other mystics have been actively immersed in the *reality* of engaging the Divine Mystery as Turbulence, as Madness, as Life-to-the-Full, the subject of this dissertation: i.e., relationships with God as dynamic and sometimes far from consoling. Each of these mystics addresses God confronting status-quo religiosity and/or interior equilibrium. Citing a male lay contemplative,

A warm and fuzzy God is the fiction of pastors who don't know how to pray. Through God one can experience the madness of the saints or the madness of hell.

Another female tertiary had this to say:

Instead of drawing us to His love, He drives us to madness. God has a dark side.

A married female mystic reminded me that

God can be irrational; we are the rational ones.

On the other hand, a fifth mystic took a more interpretive approach when I raised the issue of God as being mad. This mystic focused on the marketplace person who envisions God from a *bourgeois* perspective of sanity. The activity of God in the mystic personality is sometimes misjudged by the marketplace person as movements of *insanity*.

We don't know the broader, deeper significance of God's actions, so what seems to be madness, may be a movement to blessing.

But, I would be remiss here not to mention that Evagrius Ponticus, and other Fathers of the Christian Church, believed bourgeois

sanity to be nothing short of a *corrosive* insanity, of spiritual bankruptcy, mental disease and emotional chaos.

In some way or another, the issues of God as mad, with the mystic being invited to a mad encounter with God, the mystic having a vocation to spiritual madness, or the *worldly mindset* as *corrosive* insanity, have been raised by these persons and others with whom I spoke as *real spiritual concerns*. All are impatient with *pop*-theologians stripping mysticism of its phenomena and *huckstering* it as *do-it-yourself "cushy Jesus;"* or with academic *pedants* pontificating psychological reductionism from *ivory towers*. This, then, is a bird's-eye view of where I am doing my theology: (1) Mystics are alive and well and maybe in your neighborhood, enraptured, levitating, warring with demons or making love with God as in the past, though more underground than in previous ages; (2) Don't ever say you know thoughts as they can appear in the mind of God unless you know God as *madness*. Jesus can hold children to His breast; yet, He can also frighten by transfiguring or raising from the dead, torment demons, whip transgressors, demand us to carry our cross, or leave us scandalized. On the other hand, Satan walks among us now in a pin-striped suit by day and jeans by night, quite politically correct, the boy or girl next door.

In writing this dissertation on the phenomenon of *holy madness* (and to some degree, *holy folly*), I want it to be immediately understood that I am in no way advocating a *cult of insanity*, encouraging devotion to the god of irrationality. It is one of the points of John Wier Perry's *The Far Side of Madness*, that psychotic

episodes can be advantageous in the long run for the psychotic, *if* he/she can be helped to work through the affliction to a fuller existence.² But, irrationality is a shackle, and shackles remain shackles, however tightly or loosely they bind and should not be romanticized.

Hans Küng in his book, *Freud and the Problem of God*, argues for "critical rationality" and "rational forms of worship" within Catholicism in particular, and Christianity in general. Citing Edgar Draper, Küng writes disparagingly of "bizarre adherents, wild movements, peculiar saints." God, according to Küng, can and should be approached with "reasonable trust."³ But, caution and reason must sometimes be tossed to the wind in order to avoid a *cult of rationalism*; a cult in which a god of linear constructs is worshipped with sacrifices of megalomania. Still, reason is the ego's armoury which aids ego in shoring up fragile faith and personality -- but, to a point. And this is the wisdom of Christian mysticism and charismaticism: the veil of rationality and egoism, like the Temple veil (cf. Mt 27:51) needs be rent, so that the heart may come to a more immediate encounter and understanding of God, Who is not Pure Reason, but simply Is, Other than every thought in God which is given being. This might be a difficult concept to accept for those who thrive on Western philosophical

² "The crucial question is whether we may look into those psychotic productions for the lost affect, and if so, how it may become mobilized for the enrichment of the patient's otherwise impoverished life." John Weir Perry, MD, *The Far Side of Madness*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 123.

³ Hans Küng, *Freud and the Problem of God*, 2nd ed., trans. Edward Quinn and Caroline Murphy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 94, 114, 136, 141.

precision over Gospel hyperbole, Eastern liturgical wonder, kabbalistic esotericism, aboriginal dream-recountings or Zen koans.

Nonetheless, I *am* cultic. It is the *cult of mystical madness*, or *a-sanity*, a transcendence of discursive rationalism and egotism which I preach. It is a devotion which -- like Moses descending from the mountain -- merely relies on rational philosophic patterns to return a sense of the experience to those who have not yet had such an experience, and to encourage or defend those who have. I write from a theological framework in cadence with the contrary, the clown, the red fool -- or any holy fool.

As a Catholic mixed-blood, I have deliberately sought out Teresa of Avila as she speaks in universal language in which other mystic types can come to understand: for it is only in mystical theology that the Western and Eastern Church will come into consonance, and that aboriginal peoples will find a place among the other sons and daughters of the Creator in the universal Church of Christ.

On another note, I would like to thank my mother, Frances Blais, OCDS, my spiritual sister, whose faith, prayers and understanding have been more than supportive. I would give a word of appreciation to the Remington and Keen families for the understanding of friendship. Cudos to Deacon François Beyrouti, Brad Walton, Peter Althouse, Dom Raymond Fournier, OCSO, Ted Crosby and Mullah Liyakat Takim for a few choice references. To Donald Evans, DMin, PhD, professor emeritus, for guiding my studies in Christian mysticism and transpersonal psychology. To my advisor

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and friend James Dicenso, PhD, for his long-suffering, academic honesty, and the witness of his faith-experience. And to Michael Washburn, PhD for his encouragement and patient efforts in explaining his theories.

Introduction

The supreme reward for man is no other than a kind of madness.¹

1. The Subject

Teresa of Avila, doctor and saint, was the foundress of the Discalced Carmelite Reform in sixteenth century Spain. Born March 28, 1515 in Avila, Spain, Teresa was of *converso*² lineage, of a grandfather who purchased Christian identity. After a childhood which consisted in part of convent school, Teresa entered the cloistered life in 1535. In 1554 Teresa underwent a radical religious conversion and began to consult eminent theologians of her period. These would later include Sts. Francis Borgia and Peter of Alcantara. She claimed to be directed by Christ to begin a campaign of reforming the Carmelite Order (whose Rule was mitigated) by founding monasteries of nuns or friars, eventually enlisting persons such as St. John of the Cross and Bl. Anne of St. Bartholomew. After numerous locutions, visions, raptures and demonic desolations Teresa was transverberated.³ As part of her vocation as a Catholic Reformer of Western Christianity Teresa

¹ Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, in *The Faber Book of Madness*, ed. Roy Porter (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1991), 164.

² A *converso* is a Jew who converted to Spanish Catholicism, often out of force or necessity.

³ *Transverberation* is a term used to designate that mystical phenomenon of transpiercing the soul through the physical heart, resulting in mystical marriage with God/Christ. In an apparition Teresa's physical heart is pierced by a shaft wielded by an angel/angelic representation only for the soul to be united with God/Christ in mystical marriage. In Teresa's case, after death her heart was found to have a gaping hole in it, as if stabbed by a weapon. St. John of the Cross explains the phenomenon as one of three types of spiritual "cauterizations" or woundings of Divine Love. The other two cauterizations are a transforming union through intellectual means, and stigmata. See John of the Cross, *Llama De Amor Viva, Obras Completas* (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, 1994), 943-957.

wrote extensively, including two autobiographical texts, six mystical commentaries, numerous poems and letters, and a Constitution for her nuns. Teresa died in 1582, was canonized 1622, and was declared the first woman Doctor of the Church in 1970. Of the *great mystics*, Teresa of Avila uniquely shines as one who thoroughly outlines her mystical progress and classifies her mystical phenomena, both theologically and psychologically exceeding the standards of her period. Unlike most women mystics, Teresa was not given to visionary, devotional or prophetic writing. While John of the Cross's writing proceeds scholastically, Teresa uses a more *talmudic* method of association, often proceeding rapidly from thought to thought. Teresa's works stand out against John as more spontaneous.⁴

In the light of contemporary studies of mystical theology, feminist theology, and the psychology of religion, Teresa of Avila and her mysticism are subjects much written about. As with any dissertation, the purpose is to contribute, in an original manner, to existing studies of the subject matter to be explored. An area

⁴ The editions of Teresian primary sources to be used in this dissertation are *Obras Completas*, 3rd ed., ed. Alberto Barrientos (Madrid: Editorial de Espiritualidad, 1984); and Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD and Otilio Rodriguez, OCD's *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. 1-3 (Washington, DC: ICS, 1976, 1980, 1985). To facilitate the reader in looking up a particular reference in either text, section numbering will be used instead of page numbers in the footnotes. (Where the section numbering differs, the numbering in parentheses represents the Kavanaugh-Rodriguez translation.) When Teresian Spanish text is resorted to in this paper or footnotes, the corresponding translation into English will be that of myself. Henceforward in the text and footnotes, titles to major works of Teresa will be given in abbreviated fashion, based upon the Spanish. The same rules will apply to the works of St. John of the Cross. The critical edition used is that of *Obras Completas*, ed. Lucinio Ruano De La Iglesia (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, 1994). Similarly treated will be references or citations from St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae: Cum Textu Ex Recensione Leonina* (Rome: Marietti, 1952). According to custom, the *Summa* will be noted as *ST*. Scriptural references will be from the Vulgate, the foundation of Medieval and Renaissance spirituality. *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editiones Iuxta PP. Clementis VIII Decretum* (Milwaukee, WI: Bruce, 1955).

not previously discussed in the theology and psychology of Teresa of Avila is that of *religious madness*: Teresa's understanding of God as *mad* and the mystic as conforming to this *madness* by way of mystical transformation. The dissertation will proceed to examine Teresa's recounting of mystical experiences, especially her raptures, in which Teresa claims to have experienced God as both violent and enchanting, thus *mad*. Thus I hope to achieve a *mystical theology of madness*. The dissertation will employ, at times, the transpersonal theories of Michael Washburn in order to appreciate the psychological dynamics of Teresa's religious experiences in a contemporary frame of understanding, avoiding reductionism.

Who is Michael Washburn? Washburn is an associate professor of philosophy at Indiana University at South Bend, U.S.A. As the back cover of the first edition of his book, *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground*, suggests, Washburn

presents a transpersonal theory of human development [which uses] a broad range of both Western and Eastern sources [in order to] answer the challenge of Carl Jung. He shows how modern humans can integrate themselves and attain self-realization rather than self-destruction.⁵

Briefly, and as it will be seen, Michael Washburn maintains that the personality coming to its integration must rise out of its egocentrism in which the ego dominates and represses most of the dynamism of the personality. The ego must lose its hold in the personality so that the deeper, truer characteristics of the

⁵ Michael Washburn, *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground*, 1st ed. (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), back cover.

personality may surface, allowing the personality to play out of a heightened creativity, spiritual sensitivity and a sense of unification with creation. To achieve the *dethroning* of the ego, the repressed *ground* of the personality must *irrupt* into consciousness and induce *disequilibrium* within the personality status quo. A healing process must follow in which the personality *regenerates* itself, and finally *integrates* itself.

2. A Cursory Examination of the State of Religious Psychohistory

I used to be crazy/but now I'm sane/I traded in the interesting/for the mundane.⁶

In this century contemporary psychology has given us a steady stream of psychoanalyses and psychobiographies of Judaeo-Christian religious figures. For example, Sigmund Freud provided us with a study on Moses and monotheism.⁷ Helene Deutsch made a diagnosis of Bernadette Soubirous in 1948.⁸ Then, there was Carl Jung's famous 1954 analysis of Job.⁹ Next, Erik H. Erikson gave us *Young Man Luther*.¹⁰ Salvatore Prisco III followed suit with mini-psychobiographies of Martin Luther, Francis of Assisi and Clare of Assisi.¹¹ Nineteen eighty-two provided Kenneth C. Russell's

⁶ Sue Bowness, "654321," *The Trinity University Review* CX (Fall 1996): 18.

⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. Katherine Jones (New York, NY: Knopf, 1939).

⁸ Helene Deutsch, *The Psychology of Women* (New York, NY: Grune and Stratton, 1948).

⁹ Carl G. Jung, *Answer To Job*, trans. Richard F.C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979 [1954]).

¹⁰ Erik H. Erikson, *Young Man Luther: A Study in Psychoanalysis and History* (New York, NY: Norton, 1958).

¹¹ Salvatore Prisco III, *An Introduction To Psychohistory* (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1980).

speculation on the sexual orientation of Aelred of Rievaulx.¹² Beatrice of Nazareth was deemed a manic depressive by Jerome Kroll and Roger de Ganck in a joint paper in 1986.¹³ William W. Meissner, SJ, MD, in 1987, devoted the ninth chapter of his *Life and Faith* to yet another psychoanalysis of Martin Luther.¹⁴ In the same year D. Landsborough maintained that St. Paul suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy.¹⁵ David Weddle, in 1988, published a psychological study on the supposed melancholy of David Brainerd.¹⁶ Roy Porter defended the psychological competency of Margery Kempe also in 1988,¹⁷ while Nancy Partner deemed Kempe psychologically disturbed in 1989.¹⁸ Nineteen ninety was the year when Donald Capps and James Dittes collected together in one volume twenty conflicting psychohistories on Augustine of Hippo.¹⁹ Again Meissner has provided the fields of spirituality and psychology

¹² Kenneth C. Russell, "Aelred, 'The Gay Abbot of Rievaulx'," *Studia Mystica* 5 (#4 1982): 51-64. Akin to this study is the sociological analysis of the alleged homosexuality of Jonathan and the bisexuality of David by Tom Horner. *Jonathan Loved David: Homosexuality in Biblical Times* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1978).

¹³ Jerome Kroll and Roger de Ganck, "The Adolescence of a Thirteenth-Century Visionary Nun," *Psychological Medicine* 16 (November 1986): 745-756.

¹⁴ William W. Meissner, SJ, MD, *Life and Faith* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1987), 150-170.

¹⁵ D. Landsborough, "St. Paul and Temporal Lobe Epilepsy," *Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry* 50 (June 1987): 659-664.

¹⁶ David L. Weddle, "The Melancholy Saint: Jonathan Edwards's Interpretation of David Brainerd as a Model of Evangelical Spirituality," *Harvard Theological Review* 81 (July 1988), 297-318.

¹⁷ Roy Porter, "Margery Kempe and the Meaning of Madness," *History Today* (February 1988), 39-44.

¹⁸ Nancy Partner, "'And Most Of All For Inordinate Love': Desire And Denial In *The Book of Margery Kempe*," *Thought* 64 (September 1989), 254-267.

¹⁹ Donald Capps and James Dittes, eds., *The Hunger of the Heart: Reflections on the Confessions of Augustine* (West Lafayette, IN: Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1990).

with further psychological scrutiny, this time centring on the person of Ignatius of Loyola.²⁰ L.D. Hankoff assessed the frequency and peculiarity of the healing-exorcism phenomena of the early Church and arrived at this conclusion: that the need for healing and exorcism indicates widespread child molestation, which subsequently manifested in numerous instances of 1st century adult multiple personality disorders.²¹ Onno Van Der Hart et al. maintain that Jeanne Ferry (16th century) was the first historical person on whom a definitive retrospective analysis of multiple personality disorder can be made without error.²² There are also two recent critical biographies of the Canadian Metis prophet, Louis Riel. Each seek, in part, to correct previous psychohistories which broadly judge Riel's religiosity and political activities as signs of insanity. First, Maggie Siggins wrote an expansive biography of Riel in which Riel is painted as an idealistic utopian-millennialist, who being disillusioned, suffered from mental and physical exhaustion.²³ In his study, Thomas Flanagan characterizes Riel as "a religious enthusiast in a state of perpetual excitement." Much of Riel's alleged symptoms of

²⁰ William W. Weissner, SJ, MD, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint* (London: Yale University Press, 1992).

²¹ L.D. Hankoff, "Religious Healing in First-Century Christianity," *The Journal of Psychohistory* 19 (Spring 1992): 387-407.

²² Onno Van Der Hart, Ruth Lierens and Jean Goodwin, "Jeanne Ferry: A Sixteenth-Century Case of Dissociative Identity Disorder," *The Journal of Psychohistory* 24 (Summer 1996): 18-36.

²³ Maggie Siggins, *Riel: A Life of Revolution* (Toronto, ON: Harper Collins, 1994), 264, 247, 254, 262, 269.

insanity may be appreciated against an "ultramontane worldview."²⁴ Finally, but not exhaustively, John W. Miller has created a tapestry of hypothetical dynamics among the Holy Family, and how these dynamics reflect the inner-psychology of Jesus Christ as perceived madman.²⁵

Nor has Teresa of Avila avoided psychological scrutiny. Not to be exhaustive but rather illustrative, I take note of several psychological examinations of Teresa's mental stability and capabilities, both positive and negative. All of these have taken the approach that an accurate, and sometimes detailed, analysis of a sixteenth century personage is possible. All overstepped academic boundaries, proceeding beyond mere proposals of qualified meanings for symptoms and phenomena. Few, if any, have done a detailed sociological and/or historical contextualization of Teresa's mysticism. The following are examples: Josef Breuer's conjecture that Teresa was the "patron saint of hysteria;"²⁶ James Leuba's Freudian analysis of Teresa as mentally imbalanced;²⁷ Afra Sinnige-Breed's determination that Teresa consistently advanced in personality structuring;²⁸ Kenneth Wapnick's Schachtelian

²⁴ Thomas Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel: Prophet of the New World*, rev. ed. (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 79-80.

²⁵ John W. Miller, *Jesus at Thirty: A Psychological and Historical Portrait* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997).

²⁶ Josef Breuer, "Unconscious Ideas and Ideas Inadmissible to Consciousness -- Splitting of the Mind," *Studies on Hysteria*, Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1981), 232.

²⁷ James H. Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925).

²⁸ Afra Sinnige-Breed, "Personality and Psychological Development of Teresa of Avila," *Theology Digest* 12 (Spring 1964): 60-63.

evaluation of Teresa which concluded that Teresa experienced a "complete emergence from embeddedness;"²⁹ Catherine Romano's Freudian interpretation of Teresa as psychologically impaired;³⁰ Marcella Biro Barton's 1982 retrospective diagnosis of Teresian epilepsy;³¹ J. Ruth Aldrich's Maslow-based assessment of Teresa's self-actualization;³² Kevin Culligan's "profile" of Teresa's "psychological freedom" mixed with "emotional illness;"³³ Christopher Bache's *reappraisal* of Teresa's supposed hysteria and a defense of her competency;³⁴ Mary Coelho's *theological* dissertation which delves into object relations and psychobiography, relying heavily on Meissner and not dealing theologically at all with mystical transformation as it claims to do;³⁵ Mary Frohlich's application of self-psychology to determine Teresa's personality development;³⁶ Gross and Gross's

²⁹ Kenneth Wapnick, *The Psychology of the Mystical Experience* (Dissertation: Adelphi University, 1968), 81-82.

³⁰ Catherine Romano, "A Psycho-Spiritual History of Teresa of Avila: A Woman's Perspective," *Western Spirituality*, ed. Matthew Fox (Notre Dame, IN: Fides/Claretian, 1979).

³¹ Marcella Biro Barton, "Saint Teresa of Avila: Did She Have Epilepsy?," *The Catholic Historical Review* 68 (October 1982): 581-598.

³² J. Ruth Aldrich, "Teresa, A Self-Actualized Woman," *Carmelite Studies #2: Contemporary Psychology and Carmel* (Washington, DC: ICS, 1982).

³³ Kevin Culligan, OCD, "Teresa of Jesus: A Personality Profile," *Spiritual Life* (Fall 1983): 131-162.

³⁴ Christopher M. Bache, "A Reappraisal of Teresa of Avila's Supposed Hysteria," *Journal of Religion and Health* 24 (Winter 1985), 300-315.

³⁵ Mary C. Coelho, *The Intrapsychic Preparation for Contemplation in Teresa of Avila's Life and Teachings: An Interpretation Using Object Relations Theory* (Dissertation: Fordham University, 1990), 2.

³⁶ Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993).

"developmental biography" of Teresa;³⁷ Sara Lehr Corry's thesis which in part modified, though does not significantly depart from, Aldrich's understanding of Teresa's self-actualization;³⁸ and Evan Fales' "scientific explanation" of Teresa's ecstasies as a method for "claiming some measure of social attention."³⁹

3. My Plan: To Depart From the Academic Status Quo

Psychology, as just seen, has entered the domain of theology and religious studies. As with any human science, it has limitations, yet may prove, in given cases, to be a helpful tool in the unearthing of hidden dynamics of specialized religious phenomena. The intention of this present study on mystical transformation as found in the works of Teresa of Avila, is a departure from the studies above. These are, in some senses, highly speculative and possibly dubious. That is, they are psychological analyses of a personage who is not available for examination. Again, they undervalue (in my estimation) the human psyche's complexities and layers of motivations and needs. Also, the academics involved make diagnoses without family histories. Furthermore, Erik Midelfort maintains that

when scholars have turned their energies to individuals in the past, they have felt compelled to ignore the

³⁷ Francis L. Gross, Jr. with Toni Perior Gross, *The Making of a Mystic: Seasons in the Life of Teresa of Avila* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), xvii.

³⁸ Sara Lehr Corry, *Freedom of Soul: Teresa of Avila and Self-Actualization* (M.A. Thesis: University of New Mexico, 1994).

³⁹ Evan Fales, "Scientific Explanations of Mystical Experiences, Part I: The Case of St. Teresa," *Religious Studies* 32 (June 1996): title & 158.

cultural context and have tried instead to apply the psychological structures and assumptions of our own day to isolate and recover personalities of the past. ...Stimulating as such attempts can be, it seems to me that they tend to tell us more about our age than about strangers in a strange culture.⁴⁰

A goal of this present dissertation is the employment of transpersonal psychological theory for a *partial* appreciation of the actual psychological dynamics involved in mystical transformation, without imposing interpretive meanings, nor creating a mythology. I do not wish to dwell on the mental structure of Teresa of Avila, over-indulge in proposing reasons for suspected personality aberrations based upon scanty historical background, nor contest her ability to adapt functionally to her contemporaries. (And yet, *indirectly* and in some fashion, I will be defending the psychological competency of Teresa.) In a sense I wish to continue the work begun with William James⁴¹ and Evelyn Underhill⁴² of applying psychology to mystical experience to highlight the possibility of irruptions and disequilibrium occurring throughout transformation and consider the significance of these phenomena. Furthermore, I wish to focus on the positive aspects of such phenomena, though not excluding examination of the negative aspects. Finally, I intend to exceed the domain of psychology and enter the realm of theology: specifically, to provide theological implications of these phenomena, of which

⁴⁰ H.C. Erick Midelfort, "Madness and the Problems of Psychological History in the Sixteenth Century," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 12 (#1 1981), 5.

⁴¹ William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London: Fontana, 1960).

⁴² Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Scarborough, ON: Meridian, 1974).

little has been done to date.

4. The Core of This Thesis

It needs to be asked, "What do these mystical engagements say about the nature of God, God's desired relationship with us, the spiritual-psychological condition desired by God of us, and God's employment of psychological irruptions and disequilibrium for spiritual reasons?" I have chosen to look at these experiences and their descriptions and interpretations as primarily found in the works of Teresa of Avila. This is, in part, due to such careful first hand reporting of her mystic happenings and her reporting of second hand accounts of her contemporaries. My focus will be on the path of the Christian mystic as outlined by Teresa (and others), not on a definitive diagnosis of Teresa, although this is not to say that the two subjects do not intersect. I am more concerned with what these related accounts can say about mysticism and God, and less what they say about Teresa.

Of specific interest will be Teresa's use of the term, *insane* (*loco*)⁴³ as signifying 'various mystical experiences and as a descriptive of God. What is meant by Teresa of Avila's reference to a *holy foolishness* (*desatino*)⁴⁴? What is unique in this matter to Teresa, and how does she fit within the tradition of the *madness of saints* which includes such persons as St. Julian of Norwich with

⁴³ e.g., *Vida* 27:12; *Moradas* VI:6:11.

⁴⁴ *Meditaciones* 1:10.

her "raving,"⁴⁵ and numerous Sufi mystics?⁴⁶ Are there experiences which Teresa describes which *ought* to have the appellative *loco* -- or synonymous expressions -- but were not so designated by Teresa?

It is my contention that the employment of transpersonal theory would help in this undertaking. Therefore, I intend to use the theories outlined by Michael Washburn in order to explain the function of these irruptions and disequilibriums as found in the various stages of Teresian mystical transformation. I plan to provide, also, an argument why Freudian analysis, for example, would be defective and inappropriate, especially in light of the advances made in the understanding of the human psyche through transpersonal theory.

5. A Comparison With Other Notable Departures

My study is integrally a departure from the studies recalled above. Yet, as a departure, it sufficiently diverges from other departures. It stands apart from Ulrike Wiethaus' work⁴⁷ on several accounts: among others, (1) the subject matter to be examined would differ: the Teresian corpus vs. the Mechtildian corpus; (2) the dissertation will involve the application of

⁴⁵ Julian of Norwich, *Showings* (Long Text), trans. Edmund Colledge, OSA and James Walsh, SJ (Toronto, ON: Paulist Press, 1978), 310-311.

⁴⁶ Michael W. Dols, *Majnūn: The Madmen in Medieval Islamic Society*, ed. Diana Ilmmisch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 384-388.

⁴⁷ Ulrike Wiethaus, *Ecstatic Transformation: Transpersonal Psychology in the Work of Mechtild of Magdeburg* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996).

Washburnian transpersonal theory, rather than so much comparison of various schools of transpersonal psychological thought; (3) Weithaus is, in part, interested in arriving at a transpersonal *why* or *meaning* for ecstatic phenomena -- an *interpretation* of the phenomena -- while he objects to the inability of transpersonal theory to provide that *why* for certain mystical encounters; by contrast, in my psychological examination of Teresian experience I will employ more of a *phenomenological* approach, as does Washburn, and be partially content with examining *what* transpires, i.e. the psychological mechanics; (4) I intend to explore the theological import of these Teresian psychotic/psychoticoid experiences and not stop short at the psychological import; (5) I intend to show the significance of Teresa's valuation of mystical *insanity*, not previously examined as such in theological circles. This study will also depart from Kenneth Wapnick's work⁴⁸ on several accounts: (1) I disagree with Wapnick who views all mystical experiences as *regressive*, whereas I will maintain that only those mystical phenomena which are purgative in nature (as well as some of the illuminative experiences, such as raptures) have regressive elements; (2) I will be taking a *panentheistic*⁴⁹ approach to the data and its interpretation, as opposed to Wapnick's atheistic

⁴⁸ Kenneth Wapnick, "Mysticism and Schizophrenia," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 1 (#2 1969): 49-67.

⁴⁹ My understanding of *panentheism* is "the belief that the being of God is 'in' the whole universe, but that God's Being is more than the universe." Spiritually speaking, God is involved in the deepest recesses of the human personality, bringing it to perfection from within. Or as Teresa puts it: that God abides in the center of the interior castle *adonde pasan las cosas de mucho secreto entre Dios y el alma*: that is, "where secret things pass between God and the soul." "Panentheism," *Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. Richard P. McBrien (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1995). *Moradas* I:1:3.

understanding of mystical phenomena as metaphoric encounters with self; (3) I will carefully distinguish between psychotic and psychotic-like experiences,⁵⁰ rather than adopting Wapnick's position that all mystical and schizophrenic episodes are identical in nature and differ only in outcome; and finally, but not exclusively (4) I plan for a theological examination of Teresa's mystical *insanity*.

6. Core of Thesis, Continued

The plan of this dissertation is to proceed from the general -- mystical transformation -- to the particular -- *arrobamiento* (rapture). It is around this mystical experience that Teresa centers her notions of *holy madness*, a term not unique to myself but employed by Georg Feuerstein in his study on Eastern and Western religious fools.⁵¹

Past studies on Teresa of Avila's notion of rapture had often yielded determinations that were sketchy. For example, mystical theologians have acknowledged the violence involved in rapture, but have not examined the significance of that violence in Teresa's cultural context, and how our understanding of Teresa's milieu contributes to an appreciation of Teresa's attempts at describing her raptures. Additionally, because of sensitivities the erotic dynamics of raptures have been largely excluded from more proper

⁵⁰ Those mystical experiences which have the appearances of psychotic episodes.

⁵¹ Georg Feuerstein, *Holy Madness: The Shock Tactics and Radical Teachings of Crazy-wise Adepts, Holy Fools, and Rascal Gurus* (New York, NY: Arkana, 1990).

studies of Teresian mysticism. It is as if this exclusion functioned as a denial or censorship of what just might be a fundamental quality of raptures, suggesting the impropriety of sexual expression in an elevated religious context. Yet, as Mary Elizabeth Perry has noted,

Religious writers, such as Teresa de Jesús and Juan de la Cruz, described their mystical experiences in terms so sensual that it was difficult to distinguish between physical and spiritual love.⁵²

Finally but not exclusively, the psychological and theological implications of *arrobamiento* have not been adequately considered. The psychological implications which I should like to raise are (1) sexual derepression, (2) rapture as vehicle of psychic reorganization, and (3) distinctions between pseudopathology and pathology in raptures. All too often Teresa has been dismissed simply as a classical hysteric with little to contribute to the understanding of a healthy human nature. The theological implications which I should like to raise are (1) what Teresian raptures intimate about the nature of God, i.e., Do raptures suggest a *mad* God?, and (2) the redemption of sexuality in mystical encounters with God. These theological issues seem important in the light of Jung, who charges Christianity with mutilating itself by ignoring or excising theological inconveniences, i.e. a God Who experientially is valued as moral/immoral, sane/mad,

⁵² Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 54.

loving/jealous,⁵³ which arise in Jewish and Christian experience:

Christian experience is [sometimes] falsified; it is prettied up,⁵⁴ its sombre aspects are denied, its dangers are hidden.

The Greek Orthodox theologian, Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, brings to fore the bivalent experience of the God of Christianity (which is intensified in the life of the mystic):

God will have been the desired One and He will have been the frustrating One. He will have been the One you long for and the One you hate because He escapes you, the One you love beyond everything,...and Whom you cannot forgive...⁵⁵

Again, this divine bivalency is distinctly acknowledged by the Western mystic, St. Hadewijch:

Sometimes afire and sometimes cold/ Sometimes cautious and sometimes reckless/ Love is full of fickleness...⁵⁶

More bluntly the Sioux prophet, Lame Deer, goes beyond Christianity and suggests bipolarity within the Great Spirit:

The thunder power protects and destroys. It is good and bad, as God is good and bad, as nature is good and bad, as you and I are good and bad.⁵⁷

Regarding bivalent experience, we may have recourse to Isaiah 45:7 for illustrative reasons:

⁵³ Various throughout: Carl Jung, "Jung and Religious Belief," *Psychology and Western Religion*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984). Carl Jung, *Answer to Job*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979 [1954]).

⁵⁴ Carl Jung, "Letter to Père Lachat," *Psychology and Western Religion*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 238.

⁵⁵ Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, *School For Prayer* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1970), 69.

⁵⁶ Hadewijch, "Love's Mode of Action," *Poems in Stanzas, The Complete Works*, trans. Mother Columba Hart, OSB (Toronto, ON: Paulist, 1980), 140.

⁵⁷ John Fire Lame Deer with Richard Erdoes, *Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions* (Toronto, ON: Washington Square Press, 1972), 229.

*Formans lucem et creans tenebras, Faciens pacem et creans malum: Ego Dominus faciens omnia haec.*⁵⁸

Not only is God encountered as bivalent, but He is maintained to be experienced as sometimes *stuck* in an *amoral* mode of existence.

Jack Miles, for example, writes:

The Lord presents Himself, with withering sarcasm and towering bravado, as an *amoral*, irresistible force.⁵⁹

Throughout this latter portion of the dissertation, the notion of a God Who violently seizes and in a fashion *sacrificially violates/transgresses*⁶⁰ the mystic by means of rapture will be focused upon. The action of God upon the human person will be treated as in some ways analogous, but not identical, to rape. Too often, Alexander Irwin attests, "all traces of violence, manipulation, and domination" have been surreptitiously eliminated from *proper* theological discussion of Christian mysticism.⁶¹ Peter Awn insists, for example, that a good deal of Christian mysticism itself is at fault, seeing that there has been an "ambivalent attitude toward sensuality apparent in the writings of Christian ascetics." This ascetical ambiguity has lead to a Christian iconography in which "sensuality is sublimated."⁶² On the contrary, "surging violence" and "erotic activity" will be apprized

⁵⁸ "I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create disaster: I the Lord do all this."

⁵⁹ Jack Miles, *God: A Biography* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1995), 315. Italics added.

⁶⁰ Alexander C. Irwin, "Ecstasy, Sacrifice, Communication: Bataille on Religion and Inner Experience," *Soundings* 76 (Spring 1993): 121.

⁶¹ Irwin, "Ecstasy, Sacrifice," 125.

⁶² Peter Awn, "Sensuality and Mysticism -- The Islamic Tradition," *Asceticism*, ed. Vincent L. Winbush and Richard Valantasis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 369.

as constituent in Teresianism, as "necessary to destroy the firm boundaries which separate subject and Object, allowing for an "interpenetration."⁶³ As Julia Kristeva writes,

"Agape-passion" involves an "erotic unleashing of the death drive" which results in the mystic being "made homologous to" God.⁶⁴

7. Concerns Which Need To Be Addressed

Are there legitimate concerns when doing such a project as mine? I believe so. First. Significant attention must be given to the fact that there will be discrepancies between the paradigm of Teresa of Avila and the paradigm of Michael Washburn. Besides different influences of period and place, there are distinct emphases, and uniqueness in description. Most notable, Washburn takes into account Eastern non-Christian religious experiences and psychological theory, as well as Western Christian mystical experiences. Again, Teresa is concerned with divine/Christic union, and Washburn with personality transformation with attending embodiment. To point out differences is not, necessarily, to make statements of judgment.

Second. In examining the erotic violence in Teresa's language and experience my hermeneutic must be sensitive to contemporary Christian feminist concerns (such as rape and spousal abuse). I hope to show that passion and force need not characterize

⁶³ Irwin, "Ecstasy, Sacrifice," 117, 119, 120.

⁶⁴ Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1987), 144.

destructiveness alone, but also constructiveness and exaltation. Yet, in order to faithfully accomplish this, I will make every effort to avoid revisioning Teresa's historical context and Teresa's intent.

Third. After all that has been said, a theological issue could be raised with the notion of providing a systematic theology based on religious experience. One could argue that I was advocating a sort of *personalism*, i.e., the primacy of personal experience over and above the Christian community. But this need not be the case. Teresa herself proceeds from private religious experience as her starting point in the process of theologizing, yet arrives at mystical theology *by way of revelation*. Upon closing her *Interior Castle*, Teresa concludes:

*Y en toda me sujeto a lo que tiene la santa Iglesia
Católica Romana, que en esto vivo, y protesto y prometo
vivir y morir.*⁶⁵

In this passage Teresa explicitly confesses union with the deposit of revelation which the Christian Church has received, as well as the right of the Roman Church to examine her experiences (and commentaries therein) in the context of this deposit. For Teresa what was/is this deposit? Clearly, from this passage one may insist upon Tradition. Yet, elsewhere Teresa also openly appeals to Sacred Scripture as a determinant for the authenticity of religious experience:

De tal manera queda el crédito de que es Dios, que vaya

⁶⁵"And I completely and tightly hold to everything which the holy Roman Catholic Church believes/holds, that in this [Church] I [do] live, and [do] confess, and promise to live and to die." *Noradas*, conclusion:4.

*conforme a la Sagrada Escritura.*⁶⁶

It was Teresa's hope that private religious experiences and their derivative theology extend, clarify, and apply, yet also continue a living (not static) deposit of revelation. Metaphorically speaking, the branches (private experiences and theology) must be attached to and appeal to the vine (the public deposit), while also being critiqued by the vine (cf. Jn 15:5-10) via the greater Church community.

The Anglican theologian, David Reed, sees no fundamental error with originating the theological process in religious experience. He deems Scripture and experience as *necessarily* interactive:

Scripture as the *Word of God* is not so much prescriptive as permissive: as persons encounter the risen Christ, their experience is both extended from and tested by the biblical witness.⁶⁷

With this in mind, I plan to proceed with my efforts at producing a systematic theology based upon Teresa of Avila's recountings of mystical phenomena. I will move among private experience, history and natural science and interact with Scripture and the greater mystical tradition. I maintain that Teresa's experiences and understandings *provide valuable insight* for Christian mystics upon their quest for union and identification with Christ. Yet, I will

⁶⁶ "In the same way these [locutions] acquire divine credentials when they [the locutions] conform to Holy Scripture." *Vida* 25:13.

⁶⁷ David A. Reed, "Field Education: Theological and Spiritual Considerations," (Paper: Delivered at the Twenty-Third Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education, Minneapolis, Minnesota, January 18-22, 1995), 5.

in no way insist upon the *normativeness* of any given phenomenon.⁶⁸ Yet, I will maintain, after Teresa, that mystical transformation - in this life or the next -- is a universal imperative in Christianity. Moreover, Teresa consistently holds that the essence of any Christian theology is prayer experience.⁶⁹ Since prayer is Teresa's *core mystical theology*, my theological process takes into consideration James Bacik's understanding of revelation's dynamic:

An understanding of revelation based on an inner experience of God's grace mediated through Christ fosters a mystical spirituality that draws on a reflective prayer life and takes seriously the personal religious experiences of others.⁷⁰

There is a fourth concern. That is, the manner in which Hebrew and Christian Scripture is to be employed in this dissertation. Much in accord with Christian mystical tradition, there will at times be analogical uses of Scripture: that is, by way of illustrating or illuminating a point. It should not, therefore, be seen as a proof-texting tactic. Furthermore, as this is an academic dissertation, I will refrain from the mystical practice of interpreting Scripture esoterically.⁷¹ This, though, will not prevent me from including references to Christian mystics who have approached Scripture in such fashion. In both instances,

⁶⁸ See *Dei Verbum*, *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, OP (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1975), 754.

⁶⁹ e.g., *Vida* 11:6.

⁷⁰ James J. Bacik, "Revelation(s)," *The Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, ed. Michael Downey (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1993), 828. See also Gerald O'Collins, "Revelation," *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholic Theology*, ed. Richard P. McBrien (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1995), 1112-1114.

⁷¹ As if it contained hidden references to mystical experience or a divine gnosis of sorts which need be unscrambled.

I am well within the confines of Catholic hermeneutical tradition, seeing that Aquinas maintains three divinely inspired levels to Scripture: the literal or historical, the allegorical, and the anagogical or *spiritual* (mystical). Both the analogical and the esoterical may fit within the category of anagogical. Yet, Aquinas also makes it clear that only the literal or historical sense is appropriate for argumentation.⁷² For example, Teresa takes the washing of Jesus' feet by the woman as literal in meaning, even historical as event (*Camino* [Valladolid] 34:7, referring to Lk 7:36-38). The manna of Exodus is treated allegorically as a figure for the Eucharist in the Gospels (*Camino* [Valladolid] 34:2, referring to Ex 16:3-4). By way of analogy, Teresa reminds her audience that as David and Solomon fell into sin, so there is no reason to feel secure in a life of prayer and asceticism (*Moradas* III:1:4, referring to 2 Sm 11:1ff and 1 Kg 11:1ff). Teresa's reading of David praising God with harp and psalm is a particular example of esoterical hermeneutic. Such Davidic references, for Teresa, represent ecstatic and enmaddening joy through a mystical encounter of God (*Vida* 16:3). Again, Teresa esoterically associates the wine cellar of the Song of Songs with mystical union (*Moradas* V:1:12, referring to Sg 2:4).

Finally, there is a fifth concern, that of use of language. First. I will not be employing vertical inclusive language (God-inclusive) for the conveyance of mystical thought throughout the dissertation, since this does not represent the intentions of the

⁷² *ST* I, Q 1, a 10, resp. & reply 1.

mystics to be discussed, who viewed God as *He*. I will be using horizontal inclusive language (gender-inclusive) only when the theological and psychological discussion allows for it, which will be rare. Second. "Since [Scripture] is the product of a particular time and culture, the views expressed in it and the language in which they are expressed reflect a particular cultural conditioning, which sometimes makes them quite different from contemporary ideas and concerns."⁷³ In order to be faithful to the texts, when citing Scripture in English or Latin, or discussing scriptural notions, I will "retain the traditional biblical ways of speaking about God and about Christ, including the use of masculine nouns and pronouns."⁷⁴ Third. I will be retaining the *devotional* practice of capitalizing personal pronouns in reference to God or Christ for three reasons: (1) to do so is consistent with Teresa's practice, and thus more adequately reflects her understanding of the transcendence of God and Christ; (2) in an academic forum so influenced by postmodern demythologizing, I should think that capitalized pronouns would remove the pronouns from common usage, and thus avoid unnecessary anthropomorphism as with lower-cased pronouns of gender; (3) the practice seems to foster further clarity in discussion of subject and object in any given context.

⁷³ Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, "Preface to the Revised Edition," *The New American Bible with Revised New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1987), 1050.

⁷⁴ Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, "Preface to the Revised Edition," 1050.

Chapter One: Notions of Madness

That which is virtue in season is madness out of season...¹

I begin this dissertation with a chapter devoted to brief glances at three principal sources for notions of madness as they would develop in Teresian religious circles. The first and most obvious source for my consideration is that of the sacred scriptures. Next, I will examine Western mystical tradition for its varied positions on divine and human madness as manifested in religious contexts. Finally, I will explore medical definitions of mental debility as they arise in Medieval and Renaissance Europe, with a special emphasis on Spain. None of these examinations will be exhaustive, but rather illustrative. The purpose is to provide the reader with a setting for Teresian definitions of *religious madness* and mental illness, as these phenomena appear throughout mystical transformation and in one's dealings with God.

1. Some Scriptural Roots for the Notion of Spiritual Madness

I am fearfully and wonderfully mad (Ps 139:14).²

Judeo-Christianity has much to say about madness. It is a subject which is well treated in both the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. For example, wanton laughter (Eccl 2:2); idolatry (Jer 50:38; 51:7); pride (Jer 48:2); diverting from the moral path in general, and greed in particular (2Pt 2:16); evil (Eccl 7:25);

¹ Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo, The Philosophy of Santayana*, ed. Irwin Edman (New York, NY: Modern Library, 1936), 454.

² An Undesignated English Bible of the 17th Century, Cited by Max Hall, "Those Embarrassing Misprints," *Catholic Digest* (January 1994): 106.

ruthless plotting against God's servants (2Mc 14:5); and false prophets (Jer 29:26) are all judged as symptoms or forms of madness. From Scripture we may conclude that pervasive *worldly* ideologies and perspectives might be deemed mentally questionable: i.e., these ideologies and perspectives may mask elements of confused, stupefied or senseless thought; or cover disordered passions; and host false valuations. In some sense, sanity, morality and right judgment are equivalent. The sane person is one who serves the *Really Real* (YHWH) in His realness via His teachings (Who He is to us, and the meaning of life) and law (how to become ourselves and how to render Him praise).

Still, the notion of madness, as considered by Scripture, is not confined to condemnations of moral turpitude, but addresses psychological maladies. For example, insanity or spirits of insanity may be visited by God upon monarchs for their sins. Sins of disobedience (1 Sm 15:24; 16:14-23) or jealousy (1 Sm 18:9-11) in the case of Saul; or arrogance and self-adulation (Dn 4:25-31) in the instance of Nebuchadnezzar; might merit God's punishment through mental illness. Madness was also a curse from God to be placed on the Hebrew collective in the event of a break with the Covenant (Dt 28:28, 34). In this latter instance, it is not evident from the text whether such a curse is limited to individual outbreaks of madness, or rather involves a general moral delusion of the people. In one instance madness is invoked by the Hebrews as a curse against their enemy-diviners (Jer 50:36). Feigning madness might be a ruse, as when David is said to play the raving

psychotic before Achish. According to the redactor, in David's case it well served as protection from his anticipated foes (1 Sm 21:13-16). It should be noted that the insane were employed in the household of Achish (1 Sm 21:16); presumably, the purposes for such employment included entertainment and prophecy, but the text is not clear as to the precise reason. From the book of Jeremiah, we know that some insane persons were positioned as prophets in the Temple during Jeremiah's public mission (Jer 29:26).

Madness can be a matter of perception. In two passages in the Hebrew texts, it is not apparent whether Hosea (Ho 9:7) and a guild prophet (2 Kg 9:11) are being ridiculed as mad for purposes of mere insult, or whether the verbal abusers truly perceived the said prophets as mad. But, in Mk 3:21 Jesus' conduct and mannerisms are portrayed as leading others to think of Him as mentally impaired; in Jn 10:20 the representation of Jesus is one who is accused of being possessed, and thus out of His mind.

Madness is treated as a metaphor signifying spiritual defect. Thus, insanity is allied to notions of (spiritual) drunkenness (Jer 48:2, 26; 51:7), which might explain why the Apostles were deemed *drunk* when it is said they spoke through glossalia (Ac 2:12). It is also tied to (spiritual) blindness (Zech 12:4), shame (Jer 48:1), and folly (Hos 9:7b; Eccl 7:25). As to the latter, it would seem that the allegory is applicable because the *stultus* (fool) could be rendered simple by nature or injury (*stupiditas*)³ or

³ What we would now call *retardation*.

insania.⁴ But this sort of mad folly is not all negative in connotation. The spirit of prophecy or praise might render one enlightened and *madly foolish*, instead of spiritually negligent or ignorant. Saul is said to prophesy in an frenzied fashion, stripping naked and then being rendered unconscious (1 Sm 19:23-24). David is depicted as frantically dancing before the Ark (2 Sm 6:14) like a rich man's kept buffoon (2 Sm 6:21). Similarly, Paul says that he was taken outside of himself in ecstasy (2 Cor 12:2), although we do not know in this instance if Paul was catatonic-like (like most subsequent Christian mystics) or manic-like in behavior (like the Jewish prophets, and shamans then and now).

This adds a new slant to the notion of fool as I established in *Eutrapelia: The Dynamics of Divine and Human Playfulness*. In *Eutrapelia* I maintained that the concept of fool for Christ (1 Cor 4:10; 3:18)⁵ was based upon the practice of the day and preceding neighboring periods; that is, "dwarfs," the "half-witted" and the "deformed"⁶ were retained in the capacity of court "slaves for the purpose of amusement." Their presence was called upon for entertainment and "social commentary":

The secular fool was known for his bizarre antics and mannerisms, his sharp and calculated wit or *ingénue* mentality, his freedom to cross social boundaries, his blessings or violent cursings, being a butt of abuse or

⁴ What we would now call *psychosis*.

⁵ See also 2 Cor 11:23ff.

⁶ Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (London: Faber & Faber, 1935), 58.

a hurler of abuse, and being a human toy.⁷

What needs to be added to the understanding of this social playfulness of the court fool and the fool for Christ is a quality of madness.

To the real or feigned imbecility of the fool must be added a quality of derangement or lunacy. Suggested in the reading of Paul, is the notion that Christians are to be *mad*, some way, in the practice of Christianity. And why not? Christ Himself was rendered foolish on the Cross (1 Cor 1:18-23), and was, as I said above, portrayed as being thought mad, because of the content and delivery of His message and His overall behavior (Mk 3:21; Jn 10:20).

The Medieval or Renaissance Christian may have read Scripture as indicating that Jesus' *madness* was more than the product of others' imaginations. Teresa, for example, was well aware that Jesus was continually mocked and held in contempt during His lifetime:⁸ that His behaviors and intentions were not above scrutiny. Also, Teresa was aware that Jesus was deemed *mad* by His peers.⁹ Furthermore, she is convinced that simple meditation on the mysteries of Jesus' life may lead either to a *locura sabrosa* ("daring madness") or *melancolía* ("melancholia"),¹⁰ Source as Jesus

⁷ Donald F. Blais, OCDS, *Eutrapelia: The Dynamics of Divine and Human Playfulness* (M.A. Thesis: University of St. Michael's College, 1993), 147-148.

⁸ *Camino* 32:8.

⁹ *Vida* 16:6.

¹⁰ *Fundaciones* 6:7. The outcome is dependent upon the mental stability of the meditator.

is of this enmaddenning adventure. Frankly, the Gospels do portray Jesus Christ as one Who confronts the devil in the desert (Mt 4:1-11); converts water into wine at a wedding party (Jn 2:1-11); drives out marketers from the Temple with whips (Lk 19:45-46; Jn 2:13-17); claims He is one with God as Father (Jn 8:58); suggests that His flesh and blood are to be partaken of as food (Jn 6:52-59); orders Peter to fish for a coin in the sea, rather than handing Peter the coin (Mt 17:27); weeps fiercely over Jerusalem (Lk 19:41); sweats blood in Gethsemane (Lk 22:44); and is arrested *willingly* (Jn 18:11). All of which is not the behavior of the average *sane* person.

Presuming a degree of historicity within the Gospels,¹¹ Jesus was not always thought highly of among His contemporaries. His behavior regularly brought negative responses upon Him. Besides His being called mad (Mk 3:21), it is said that the pharisees attempted a failed arrest of Jesus (Jn 7:32). It is also recorded that the pharisees plotted to put Him to death (Mt 12:14). Again, the redactor of the Gospel of John insists that there were a number of disciples who deserted Jesus over His teaching on the Eucharist (Jn 6:66). In Matthew, Jesus was asked to leave the district of the Gadarenes (Mt 8:34). In John, some of Jesus' hearers in Jerusalem picked up stones to kill Him, but Jesus evaded them (Jn 9:59). The Nazarenes are said to have driven Jesus out of their town, and tried to hurl Him over an embankment, but He narrowly escaped (Mt 5:48).

¹¹ I will leave determinations of the degree of historicity to biblical scholars.

According to early high Christology, Jesus claimed that He was acting in imitation of the Heavenly Father:

Quaecumque enim ille fecerit, haec et Filius similiter facit (Jn 5:19).¹²

Also, Jesus is said to have professed that He was one with the Father (Jn 10:38; 14:10, 20). Now, the Father Himself is declared to possess foolishness and act through it (1 Cor 1:25). Are there elements then in the Hebrew tradition, and culminating in early Christianity, which suggest that God can function in folly or play madly? That is, elements other than this Pauline reference, or inference based on the Gospel lives of Jesus? In Psalms, God is said to play engagedly with His creations in His own Person (eg. Ps 104:26; Job 40:29). In Proverbs, God plays through Wisdom (Prv 8:30-31)¹³. In both instances, God seems thoroughly absorbed in such play. But, there are also notions in Scripture which suggest that the playfulness of God may be experienced in a way as to suggest pathology or defect in expression. For example, Job is portrayed as valuing himself "a target of some archery contest" which had gotten out of hand (Job 16:12b-13a).¹⁴

Play reveals that God in His playfulness can be experienced as brute force, as cruelty, as vindictiveness, as ruthlessness.¹⁵

In both the absorption of wonderment and in brute force, there is

¹² "Indeed whatever He does, this the Son does also."

¹³ Blais, *Eutrapelia*, 79-80.

¹⁴ Blais, *Eutrapelia*, 85.

¹⁵ Blais, *Eutrapelia*, 86.

an excessiveness and anxiousness in the manner in which God is said to *play*, as far as biblical representation is concerned. This excessiveness is seen also in the biblical concepts of God's love. In Exodus, we are introduced to God as being jealous, His very name is Jealous:

Dominus zelotes nomen eius (Ex 34:14).

In the parable of the prodigal son, God's excess is depicted in the unnamed father who hastens anxiously and indiscriminantly toward his wayward son (Lk 15:20). Once more, God is depicted as exceedingly prizing the world, such that He has given up His only-begotten Son over it (Jn 3:16).

Did Teresa of Avila receive the biblical portrayal of God as manifesting a *hint* of *pathology*, psychological or moral? We know, for example, that Teresa confesses God/Christ is motivated by a jealous love.¹⁶ Again, Teresa uses the Book of Job to explain her early relationship with God. Her hermeneutic allows Teresa to see God as both desiring and permitting the temptation of Job via the devil. That is, *God both wills and allows diabolical play*. Appropriating the story of Job, Teresa insists that several devils were the actual contestants at play in her spiritual life, not God. These demons, according to Teresa, use her soul like a ball which is tossed about. Yet, God's role in her game is one in which He accompanies her in the tossing about, regulates the degree of play (like a referee), and gives instructions to the demonic

¹⁶ *Camino* 22:8.

participants (like a coach).¹⁷ Teresa confirms her experience of God as quasi-pathological through her reading of the Book of Job. God is not evil, yet He is not always kind; there is ambiguity to God.

These Scriptural references represent the tradition which Christian mystics treated as paradigmatic for their personal religious experiences. The body of Scripture was appreciated as a cohesive unit of revelation, and so is presented here as a unit. Its historicity was not questioned. In laying out the passages as I have done, I have tried to both respect the *literal* level in which Medieval and Renaissance mystics would have *first* approached the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, while leaving conflicts over historicity to contemporary biblical scholars, demythologizers and deconstructionists. Yet, in mystical literature, exegesis is not confined to the literal level, but transcends to allegorical, analogical or esoterical interpretations (the analogical and the esoteric being what Aquinas calls *spiritual* or mystical.)¹⁸ Scripture is a revealed unit and at the same time may contain a hidden esoteric *gnosis*. Therefore, the mystic as theologian may even have to cut-and-paste passages to make this message plain. John of the Cross, after Augustine,¹⁹ is a master in mystical exegesis. Take as an example the scriptural hermeneutic of *Ascent*

¹⁷ *Vida* 30:11.

¹⁸ *ST I*, Q 1, a 10, resp. Pope St. Gregory the Great's usage of Scripture in this fashion is paradigmatic for Medieval and Renaissance exegesis. See Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1996), 40-43.

¹⁹ Consider *De civitate Dei*, replete as it is with numerology.

of Mount Carmel. Teresa treats the *Song of Songs* and the *Our Father* in much the same manner.

2. A Mystical Context For Religious Madness

O Fortune, variable as the moon, you ever wax and wane; this detestable life now maltreats us, then grants us our wildest desires; it melts both poverty and power like ice.²⁰

In this section I will introduce the notions of divine and mystical madness according to Christian mystical tradition. To be sure, Teresa, in insisting upon such *realities* as religious madness, was not unique by any stretch of the imagination, as will be seen. Yet, even today such religious thinkers as Matthew Kelty, OCSO have raised the issues of God as mad, and the lover of God as mad in kind.

When I tried to console them [the injured, the bereaved, etc.] with talk about the God I knew and loved, I could not. My God was kind and reasonable and good and benign. He never did things like that [i.e. to set out to hurt others].

I thought I had better change my God. I did. I came here [to the monastery]. I thought this place was mad and full of monks loving a God Who was also mad. ...When you operate in the area of madness you begin to speak a language that God speaks...

God is not only a God of light, He is also a God of darkness. ...God is simply not sensible and reasonable and fashioned according to our own dimensions...

There is need also of the madness of great love, the love of those who know God, know how He works, and can recognize His hand.²¹

²⁰ An Anonymous Goliard, "*Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi*," trans. Lucy E. Cross, Liner Notes for *Carmina burana*, composed by Carl Orff, recorded by St. Louis Symphony (BMG 1994).

²¹ Matthew Kelty, OCSO, *Sermons In A Monastery: Chapter Talks* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1983), 17, 19.

These are religious issues which Kelty, Jack Miles,²² myself, and the mystics whom I consulted for the preface have, and which Teresa herself had (to be demonstrated). Is there a history in Christianity of such theological themes? Yes; most definitely. This notion of divine madness encompasses both a God Who is experienced as effusive or manic and a God Who is experienced as raw brutality. I write of the Holy Trinity as speculated upon by Archimandrite Kallistos Ware: a God Who *literally* creates by an essential ecstasy. God is

a love that causes God to go out of Himself and to create things other than Himself.²³

This divine dynamism is far from tame, both in God's Self and in our experience of God. My position for approaching Teresa, and the greater Christian mystical tradition, is in contradistinction to the theological outlook of Michael Stoeber. Stoeber writes only of a mystical mindset in which

one experiences a profound consolatory power as the pain and suffering of evil is somehow shared or transferred to God.²⁴

For Stoeber, the God of Christian mysticism *should* be a God of Consolation. Rather, I acknowledge a strain in Christian mysticism in which God is perceived as Mad, a strain in which, contrary to Stoeber, the presence of God or His demands are *not* "easily

²² To whom I referred in the introduction.

²³ Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1986), 56.

²⁴ Michael Stoeber, *Evil and the Mystic's God: Towards a Mystical Theodicy* (Hampshire: Macmillan, 1992), 133.

managed."²⁵ I acknowledge a strain in Christian mysticism in which God is both consoling *and* discomfoting, inviting *and* threatening.

Let us begin my discussion of religious madness in Christianity with a digression to Plato. Plato's philosophy on divine madness, though not the earliest, was the most profound of the Greek philosophies regarding this topic. Furthermore, Plato's philosophy would influence subsequent Christian mysticism. In his work, *Phaedrus*, Plato concentrates upon these concepts and insists that there are substantially two kinds or genera of madness which afflict human nature, one which debilitates and one which exalts:

There are two kinds of madness, one produced by human illness, the other by a divinely inspired release from normally accepted behavior.²⁶

Within the second sort, that is, that type which proceeds from the gods, there are four species which come as gifts upon their human recipients:

We also distinguished four parts within the divine kind and connected them to four gods.²⁷

What are these four maddening *gifts*? They are the madness of "prophecy," the madness of the "mystic rites" of expiation, the madness or "muse" of "poetry," and the "god-sent madness" of love-sickness (specifically, homoeroticism). The first is claimed to extend from the agency of Apollo, the second through the agency of Dionysus, the third of the Muses, and the fourth of Aphrodite. And

²⁵ Stoeber, *Evil and the Mystic's God*, 132.

²⁶ Plato, *Phaedrus*, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1995), 63.

²⁷ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 27.

yet, Plato, through Socrates, acknowledges that the philosopher may also be "possessed by [a] god" such that he is given to periods of madness, of being raised ecstatically "aloft" into the snares of beauty.²⁸

They are beside themselves, and their experience is beyond their comprehension because they cannot fully grasp what it is that they are seeing.²⁹

These madresses are the property of the gods, as the gods are mad themselves, and delightfully so. In some sense the gods are as much in the image of human beings, as human beings are made in the image of the gods. The gods in turn bestow their own madness upon their devotees as they see fit. For example, it is into the Sibyl that Apollo is said by Virgil to place his mad spirit and possess her in a violent fashion, both in soul and body. This allows the Sibyl to conform to Apollo and speak his mind and truth to others.³⁰

Josef Pieper wrote a commentary on *Phaedrus*. Within the text Pieper suggests that the word *madness* is deficient, not fully representing the intention of Plato, for "the word connotes unsoundness and irrationality." Yet, Pieper then goes on to discuss "*theia mania*" as a "heaven-sent madness, more worthy of veneration than the products of human discretion." Even so, Pieper notes that *mania* of itself is not being advocated by Plato, through

²⁸ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 27-29, 39-49.

²⁹ Plato, *Phaedrus*, 38.

³⁰ Josef Pieper, *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York, NY: Harcourt, Bruce & World, 1964), 55.

his character Socrates. *Mania* is not a panacea for human weakness; nor are all species of *mania* *goods* in themselves.³¹

Socrates does not maintain that *mania* is normal to man and essential to his soundness. Rather, he says that it is not an evil in every case. Nor does he outrightly declare *mania* a good. Instead, he says that it can possibly be a means, an aid, a path to a good, in fact even to the greatest blessings -- on condition, that is, that *mania* is imparted to man as a divine gift.³²

As to the second sort of *madness*, mystical madness, originating in Dionysus, it is a "cathartic *mania*" consisting of a "god-induced ecstasy." It was to function as a means by which inherited conditions brought on by "ancient sins" could be lessened or eradicated.³³

Deliverance [from the penalty of these sins] can be obtained...only [through the]...surrender . . . of the rudder of rational self-control and autonomy.³⁴

The Platonic Jew, Philo, is also fascinated with the phenomena of divine and mystical madness. For example, Philo focuses upon the state of the prophet which he calls "divine possession." This prophetic condition is a "frenzy," a situational "madness" which "falls upon us." According to Philo, when divinity comes upon the prophet, the light of reason of the prophet is displaced or overshadowed and the light of divinity takes possession in a superior and magnificent way. The manner of divine communication is so overpowering as to induce an ecstatic *madness* in the

³¹ Pieper, *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, 49.

³² Pieper, *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, 53.

³³ Pieper, *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, 58.

³⁴ Pieper, *Enthusiasm and Divine Madness*, 60-61.

prophetic vessel, albeit defective, which the divine Spirit has chosen to possess. One might even say that this *madness*, the effect of the presence of the divine Spirit, is "inspired."³⁵

But when it comes to its setting, naturally ecstasy and divine possession and madness fall upon us. For when the light of God shines, the human light sets; when the divine light sets, the human dawns and rises. This is what regularly befalls the fellowship of the prophets. The mind is evicted at the arrival of the divine Spirit, but when that departs the mind returns to its tenancy. Mortal and immortal may not share the same home. And therefore the setting of reason and the darkness, which surrounds it produce ecstasy and inspired frenzy.³⁶

This *crazedness* might appear to others as a drunken state, and that is because non-prophetic persons are "foolish." Indeed, the "God-possessed" are "drunk in a sense" upon "the loving-cup of perfect virtue."³⁷ According to Bernard McGinn's understanding of Philo, prophetic madness is a "sober intoxication" "in which the mind is taken out of itself."³⁸

It appears that Pseudo-Dionysius adopted some of the Platonic notions concerning divinity. For Pseudo-Dionysius the nature of the Christian God is ecstatic. God goes outside of Himself to creatures in Love, and brings them back to Himself in that same Love. Thus, God is paradoxically still "within Himself."

"The very cause of the universe" is due to God being

³⁵ Philo, *Who is the Heir of Divine Things*, *Philo: In Eleven Volumes*, vol IV, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, ed. T.E. Page et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 411.

³⁶ Philo, *Who is the Heir of Divine Things*, 419.

³⁷ Philo, *On Drunkenness*, *Philo: In Eleven Volumes*, vol III, trans. F.H. Colson and G.H. Whitaker, ed. T.E. Page et al. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1949), 395, 397.

³⁸ Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1994), 40.

"carried outside of Himself in the loving care He has for everything." He "comes to abide within all things...by virtue of His supernatural and ecstatic capacity to remain nevertheless, within Himself."³⁹

Trinity comes to the individual by His ecstatic love, and "brings ecstasy so that the lover belongs not to self but to the Beloved."⁴⁰ Commenting on Pseudo-Dionysius, Bernard McGinn notes the Dionysian Godhead is vibrant, vital and the God of "Eros." This erotic Divinity is able to madly go out of Himself

in a complete ecstasy of self-giving because He alone has the ability to remain absolutely within Himself, utterly transcendent to all things.⁴¹

This divine outpouring is without limit, extreme, thoroughly self-consuming; hence, it is joyfully and freely made. God is a God Who can and cannot contain Himself. Within the field of His Being He must of His nature dispense Himself to that which is not Himself.

In the circle of love that forms the Dionysian universe we have a God Who becomes ecstatic in procession, and a universe whose ecstasy is realized in reversion.⁴²

Hence, it is not without consequence that the mystic returns to this ecstatic God by means of ecstatic encounters.

In European Judaism, specifically Spanish, there is a preoccupation with notions of bivalency in God. Even more so, there is a concern which arises around the *dark side* of God. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob can be viewed as pathological, and

³⁹ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names, The Complete Works*, trans. Colin Luibheid (New York, NY: Paulist, 1987), 82.

⁴⁰ Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names*, 82.

⁴¹ McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, 167.

⁴² McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism*, 168.

not divinely expansive or ecstatic. According to the Zohar and other kabbalah of the period, evil arose out of a disharmony within the Godhead, a disharmony induced by the sin of Adam. Divine Severity was no longer in balance with Divine Love. Outside of God this Severity established itself as evil. As Gershom Scholem explains,

However, in its exuberance this fire ["severity"] bursts outward, becoming independent in a surge of strength; in this new modality, severity is no longer mitigated or balanced by the other forces within the divine dynamic, but operates as the power of evil in creation.⁴³

The personage of Satan is a product of this Divine Severity out of alignment:

Satan's independent being is thus a consequence of our decision made by Adam who, by his improper contemplation of the Divine, caused a separation within the Godhead that had a baleful effect on all of creation.⁴⁴

For the mystic Jew, the communication and nature of God, after Adam's sin, were *schizophrenic* or dissociative. Expressions of Goodness, Love, Beauty and so forth could be cordoned off from expressions of Severity. But the nature of God is not morally defective, since within God, Severity is still Severity; "it is not evil, although it is the source of evil."⁴⁵

There is a steady stream of Christian mystics dealing with the notion of God as the *Mad God* and/or of a *mystical madness* proceeding from God as its Source. Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173)

⁴³ Gershom Scholem, *On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead: Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1991), 72.

⁴⁴ Scholem, *On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead*, 70.

⁴⁵ Scholem, *On The Mystical Shape*, 72.

maintains that ecstasy is an *alienatio mentis*, an "alienation of mind", i.e. a form of madness. For Richard, this ecstatic contemplation is characterized by its excessiveness.⁴⁶ But ecstasy is not the highest form of spiritual madness knowable to the mystic in this life. As Bernard McGinn suggests, Richard believes in a sustained condition of mystical madness arising from contemplation, in which the mystic is driven or compelled to missionize and leave behind the consolation of contemplation and the prayer-companionship of God/Christ. McGinn cites Richard's query on the subject:

*Nonne summe amentic videtur esse veram vitam
repellere...?*⁴⁷

The mystic somehow may be enmaddened by God. One might say, instead of being driven into the desert like Nebuchadnezzar, deranged and apart from society (Dn 4:30), the mystic plunges headlong into society or the Church in a creative and contributive mode. In the process, the heartening intimacy of God/Christ is in some fashion left aside for something less. Richard insists that giving up the greater for the lesser is a form of spiritual madness induced by the Divine Lover. Commenting, McGinn writes,

The true ordering of charity involves the insanity of love that drives the mystic to abandon even the experience of divine love itself...⁴⁸

⁴⁶ McGinn, *Growth of Mysticism*, 411, 412.

⁴⁷ Richard of St. Victor, *De quator gradibus*; Ives, *Épître à severin sur la charité Richard de Saint-Victor*, ed. Gervais Dumeige (Paris: Vrin, 1955), 175. Cited in McGinn, *Growth of Mysticism*, 600 (note 268). Translation is mine.

⁴⁸ McGinn, *Growth of Mysticism*, 418.

Beatrice of Nazareth (1200 - 1268) views mystical madness differently. For example, she claims that the love of God may so overwhelm the soul in prayer that the soul's faculties are disabled. The mystic finds that he/she is rendered helpless, as in an ecstatic *holy dementia*.

*Mens eius insane suspensa ex vehementi cupidine; et huc trahunt omnes sensus eius, ut esse velit in fruitione Amoris.*⁴⁹

The motions of this Divine Love may be painfully felt, however delightful. The love, which is infused/induced by God in the soul, induces a state of affliction, which tears at or wounds the soul.

*O sanctu cupido amoris, ... Est beata passio, et acutum tormentum, et diuturnum malum, et recans mors, et vita moriens!*⁵⁰

Beatrice speaks of a "fifth mode" of love which may inhabit the soul, and which she terms a *insania quedam sancti desiderij*.⁵¹ It causes the interior faculties to act in the manner of a *belue rudientis et indomite* -- a "beast roaring and wild" -- or as *insaniret* -- a "madman." Beatrice confesses that in such a mad condition the soul feels compelled *violenter apprehendere voluisset*.⁵² The soul is ruled, it seems, both by the posture of its sudden irrationality and by the outpouring of God in the soul.

⁴⁹ "Its mind is madly suspended in a vehement desire; and all its senses draw [at] it until it wills to be in the fruition of Love." Beatrice of Nazareth, *Seven Manieren van Minne, The Life of Beatrice of Nazareth* (Latin/English), trans. and annot. Roger DeGanck (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian, 1991), 320. The English translations are mine, not DeGanck's.

⁵⁰ "O holy desire of love...It is a blessed passion, and an acute torment, an extended evil, a murderous death, and a deathly life!" Beatrice, *Seven Manieren van Minne*, 326.

⁵¹ "A sort of madness of holy desire." Beatrice, *Seven Manieren van Minne*, 308.

⁵² "To violently apprehend what is desired." Beatrice, *Seven Manieren van Minne*, 308.

Truly, the mystic may be without self-control, but this does not mean that the mystic is uncontrollable; rather, he/she is conquered and bound by something more powerful than him/herself. Furthermore, Caroline Walker Bynum recalls that "after her first mystical trance," Beatrice was overwhelmed with unrestrained laughter.⁵³ At one point, Bynum remembers Beatrice's desire to "drive herself mad" in the sense of an Eastern holy fool, but she was forbidden by her confessor.⁵⁴

Hadewijch (13th century) continues in this vein, but with a twist: the madness of God is able to be experienced in a bivalent fashion. "The madness of Love" can arise and overtake in both "storm and in adventure." Either way, perseverance is demanded of the mystic; the mystic is required to make "many a gallant stand."⁵⁵ Those who do not understand the radical demands of Love, for whom the "misery of Love is unknown," have not been successful in the ways of mad Love.⁵⁶ This Love demands that one "sincerely forsake all for Love," demanding that one "endure" in her madness and without "success".⁵⁷ The Christian pursues spirituality simply for the sake of loving, and loving madly. Furthermore, Love

⁵³ This makes one think of the contemporary phenomenon of holy laughter among the Toronto Vineyard.

⁵⁴ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 163.

⁵⁵ Hadewijch, "Nobility in Love," *Poems in Stanzas, The Complete Works*, trans. Mother Columba Hart, OSB (Toronto, NY: Paulist, 1980), 220-221. (The remaining citations from Hadewijch come from the same collection of works.)

⁵⁶ Hadewijch, "Playing the Niggard," *Poems in Stanzas*, 255.

⁵⁷ Hadewijch, "Sure Reward," *Poems in Stanzas*, 165.

"melts" the soul in her "madness."⁵⁸ She may even *fling down* the soul so that the soul "imagines he will never rise again -- unless it be unexpectedly."⁵⁹ The soul then *cries out* and *laments*. For, Love has actively taken hold of the soul by daylight, and in so doing grasps the soul to herself and makes the soul beside himself in joy and expansion (ecstasy). Then, quickly and as if without thought, Love casts the soul into darkness where he pines away in "the madness of love" (desolation).⁶⁰ Either way, Love likens the soul to herself, robbing the soul of the marketplace's standard of reason:

In high Love's school/ Is learned the madness of Love;/
For it causes delirium/ In a person formerly of good
understanding.⁶¹

This Love, too, has an ambiguous nature. As Hadewijch explains, this supreme Love simultaneously "knocks down" and "seizes." How? In "one stroke."⁶²

Other mystics for whom the madness of God is a theme, do not write so frequently about the subject as does Hadewijch. Nonetheless, divine and mystical madness continues to be heralded by the voices of contemplatives. Gertrude of Helfta (1256 - 1302) insisted that it was as if Love, in a demeanour of lordly arrogance, sets aside reason and "inebriates" God to the point of

⁵⁸ Hadewijch, "The New Path," *Poems in Stanzas*, 145.

⁵⁹ Hadewijch, "Subjugation to Love," *Poems in Stanzas*, 193.

⁶⁰ Hadewijch, "Defense of Love," *Poems in Stanzas*, 179.

⁶¹ Hadewijch, "The Madness of Love," *Poems in Stanzas*, 207.

⁶² Hadewijch, "Love's Mode of Action," *Poems in Stanzas*, 140.

a sublime "madness." This divine madness allows God to assume that which is foreign and beneath Him (the human soul) and "join" Himself to it. That is, when God comes to the soul to unite it with Him, He comes as if drunk and crazed in love. Hence, we may infer, God draws the soul into this Self-same drunkenness and crazedness:

Imperious love, which does not wait for judgment and dispenses with all reason, has, as it were, my most sweet Lord,...inebriated You even to madness, in that You should join Yourself with one so unlike You.⁶³

On the other hand, Jacopone da Todi (1230/6 - 1306) focuses firmly upon the mad-consciousness and mad-behaviorisms of the Christian mystic, as dominated by love for God. da Todi insists, in a fashion which is as factual as it is effusive, that the beloved mystic *ought* to be love-sick over the Divine-Human Lover, that such a passionate, zealous, thoroughly consuming love for Christ is virtuous and to be encouraged:

It is right and fitting, I believe/ To go mad over the fair Messiah./ A great wisdom, it is, indeed, to go mad,/ Out of one's mind with the love of God.

Now such a spiritual madness, da Todi admits, may be misunderstood by those who are not so afflicted. It may appear to non-initiants as so much defect of personality and action, especially when spiritual madness has led to displays of pining away. Yet

He who is mad with love of Christ/ In appearance is troubled and distressed - / But in truth he is a doctor/ In natural philosophy and theology.⁶⁴

⁶³ Gertrude of Helfta, *The Herald of Divine Love*, trans. Margaret Winkworth (New York, NY: Paulist, 1993), 106.

⁶⁴ Jacopone da Todi, *The Lauds*, trans. Serge and Elizabeth Hughes (Toronto, ON: Paulist, 1982), 241-242.

For da Todi, mystical experience/theology and the virtue stemming therefrom is *the* Truth. The emmaddened mystic is not a mere student, but proficient in love, thus a doctor, a scholar. And this doctor or scholar is a true philosopher, an authentic lover of wisdom, and an authentic knower of God, hence a theologian. All other ways of knowing and existing pale before this mystical madness, to the point of being as if untrue. Mystical love-sickness is or approaches the height of human contact with the Divine.

Angela of Foligno (1248 - 1309) believes that God sometimes enters the soul "with double intensity and with such divine fire and love," that not only are fears cast out. No, the soul may even "languish" within a love-sickness. And why does this love-sickness transpire? It is because this Divine Love is "excessive." God knows no limits in loving,⁶⁵ unlike the human person who is governed by limits.

Ramon Llull (1232 - 1316) views the mystic as a person devoted to religious folly: a folly in the eyes of the marketplace, which is a wisdom in the eyes of God. Also, Llull seems to have experienced God as a sort of *spiritual ambiguity*. The mystic lover of God/Christ goes about the marketplace as a *stultus*,⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Bl. Angela of Foligno, *The Book of Blessed Angela (Memorial)*, *The Complete Works*, trans. Paul Lachance, OFM (New York, NY: Paulist, 1993), 188.

⁶⁶ A court fool or jester, in reference to 1 Cor 4:10. See Blais, *Eutrapelia*, 147-148.

figuratively chanting the praises of the Divine Beloved.⁶⁷ He accomplishes this *chanting* through fidelity to a life of prayer, the virtues and mortification. In reaction, the marketplace responds by asking love's mystic troubadour if he had lost his "senses." That is, the world treats the mystic with contempt, as if moronic, as if insane. Interiorly, this "fool for love" (*fatuus propter amorem*) experiences God/Christ as both pleasure and pain, not necessarily one than the other.⁶⁸ In a sense, the mystic is treated little better by God/Christ than by the marketplace. As Llull writes,

*Dixit amicus ad amatum Salus mea languoresque mei in te sunt.*⁶⁹

The path to this Divine Beloved is laden with "thorns" which feel like "flowers;"⁷⁰ and His love is both "happiness" and "misery."⁷¹ God/Christ is a quandary to the soul, not in accord with our notions of justice, mercy or reason.

Meister Eckhart (1260 - 1328), as with Pseudo-Dionysius, concerns himself also with the notion of the ecstatic essence of God. Eckhart believes that God is Rapture, and has written to this effect:

⁶⁷ Ramon Llull, *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved* (Polyglot: Old Catalan, Latin, English), trans. Mark D. Johnston (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1995), 22. The English translation, here, is mine not Johnston's, and from the Latin not the Old Catalan.

⁶⁸ Llull, *The Book of the Lover*, 56

⁶⁹ "Said the Lover [the mystic] to the Beloved [God/Christ]: 'My health and weariness are from You.'" Llull, *The Book of the Lover*, 22.

⁷⁰ Llull, *The Book of the Lover*, 16.

⁷¹ Llull, *The Book of the Lover*, 44.

God finds joy and rapture to the full and the person who dwells within God's knowing and God's love becomes nothing other than what God Himself is.⁷²

God desires that we reflect His interior dynamic. What does this require but, according to Eckhart, our participation in God's ecstatic nature, so that we might become a likeness of this divine enrapturement. Furthermore, Eckhart wants his readers to know God's essence is a sublime *madness* which reduces God to behaviors of absolute folly, lacking all sense of human or angelic reserve and discretion.

God has been made so foolish by His love of us that it is as if He had forgotten the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of earth and all His happiness and all His Godhead. It is as if He had nothing to do except what He does with me, so that He gives me everything that might console me. He gives this to me totally and He gives it to me perfectly. He gives it in its purest state and at all times and to all creatures.⁷³

Johann Tauler (1300 - 1361) refers to a frenzy-phenomenon which overcomes the mystic when he/she becomes immersed in the intensity of God. Tauler calls this state of frenzy "jubilation." It is marked by a sense of "drunkenness," "unutterable joy" and manifesting the Spirit in tongues. He cautions about danger involved with "jubilation," noting that it has led to physical death when followed by love-sickness.

This drunkenness is followed by a state of unutterable joy, in which everything they meet fills them with wonder and joy...

After this comes the third state, in which people can die

⁷² Meister Eckhart, *Breakthrough* (Select Sermons), trans. and comm. Matthew Fox (Toronto, ON: Image, 1991), 155.

⁷³ Eckhart, *Breakthrough*, 152-153.

of a broken heart because God works in them so strongly and vehemently that it is more than they can bear...⁷⁴

It is also said that Catherine of Siena (1347 - 1380) was confirmed in the madness of Divine Love. Her amanuensis, Bl. Raymond of Capua, records Catherine as having *complained* of the immoderation and indiscrimination -- the near-indiscretion -- of God's act of loving. God's expression of excess is not unique to His relationship with Catherine, although she perceives such excess with intensity and singularity. Frankly, this divine madness is baffling to Catherine, nay inexpressible.

I confess, and do not deny, that you loved me before I existed, and love me now ineffably, like one maddened by excess of love.⁷⁵

In her *Dialogue*, Catherine speaks of this divine excess in several ways. For example, God is *monomaniacal* in Catherine's mind. This monomania is expressed in God's acting as if He justifies His existence upon our existence:

It seems You are so madly in love with Your creatures that You could not live without us!⁷⁶

His monomania causes Him as if to completely lose His sanity:

You love me unspeakably much, as one gone mad over Your creature.⁷⁷

Again, it expresses itself in obsessive-compulsive behavior (to use

⁷⁴ Johann Tauler, *Spiritual Conferences*, trans. Eric Colledge and Sr. M. Jane, OP (Rockford, IL: Tan Books, 1978), 174-175. Other mystics have written on the phenomenon of *jubilatio*, for example St. Gregory the Great and Richard of St. Victor. See McGinn, *Growth of Mysticism*, 64, 413.

⁷⁵ Bl. Raymond of Capua, *The Life of St. Catherine of Siena*, trans. George Lamb (London: Harvill, 1960), 326.

⁷⁶ St. Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Moffke, OP (New York, NY: Paulist, 1980), 63.

⁷⁷ Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, 364.

contemporary terms):

You are insatiable [with love]...⁷⁸

Divine excess may also be experienced as an inebriation. This inebriation is experienced on the part of the mystic *drinking in* this excess and being overwhelmed by it:

Then the soul stood before God as if intoxicated...⁷⁹

Or again,

With that light I sense my soul once again becoming drunk!⁸⁰

But this inebriation is not confined to the mystic. God is said to be drunk on His own Spirit, on His own excess! Catherine, at one point, refers to God as "one drunk with love for our good."⁸¹

Catherine of Genoa (1447 - 1510) also is said to have experienced God as *spiritual ambiguity*, in a manner consistent with Llull. Frequently, Catherine would say, "Peace is God" or "God is...my Beatitude, my Good, my Delight." Yet, as Friedrich von Hügel would say,

"The severity with which this purity [of Divine Love] progressively eliminates [in Catherine] all selfish motives and attachments" finds itself experienced as "pain or oppression."⁸²

Ellen Leonard, commenting further on this *ambiguity* remarks that

⁷⁸ Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, 364.

⁷⁹ Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, 71.

⁸⁰ Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, 366.

⁸¹ Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, 55.

⁸² Friedrich von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studies in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends*, vol 1 (New York, NY: E.P. Dutton, 1927), 265, 266, 268, 269.

for Catherine

Purgatory, *like her conversion experience*, is a plunge into love which transforms the soul.⁸³

God -- Love -- is purgative as He is transformative for those who seek out His love. This divine ambiguity is evident in Catherine's *Purgation and Purgatory*:

He [God] tugs at it [the soul] with a glance,
draws it and binds it to Himself with a fiery love
that by itself could annihilate the immortal soul.
In so acting, God so transforms the soul in Him
that it knows nothing other than God...⁸⁴

It appears that Catherine's experience of God as ambiguous is colored by a sense of divine jealousy, for the soul is bound to God, it "knows nothing other than God."

Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi (1566-1607), an Italian Calced Carmelite, teaches that the essence of the Divine-Human, Jesus, is *mad-love* or *love-sickness* to the point of irrationality or a-rationality:

You do not know, beloved sisters, that my Jesus is nothing but love, yes, mad with love. You are mad with love, my Jesus...⁸⁵

But whereas Hadewijch looks directly at the Trinity as the Cause of bivalency in religious experience, de' Pazzi focuses upon Jesus as the bivalent expression of the Trinity:

You are both pain and slaking, toil and rest, life and

⁸³ Ellen Leonard, *The Spiritual Legacy of Friedrich von Hügel* (Toronto, ON: Unpublished manuscript, 1995), 99. Italics are mine.

⁸⁴ St. Catherine of Genoa, *Purgation and Purgatory, The Spiritual Dialogue*, trans. Benedict J. Groeschel, OFM Cap. (New York, NY: Paulist, 1979), 79.

⁸⁵ Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, Cited in *The Soul Afire: Revelations of the Mystics*, ed. H.A. Reinhold (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1973), 342.

death in one.⁸⁶

And where de' Pazzi finds Jesus' bivalency pleasurable and endearing like Beatrice of Nazareth finds God's bivalency, Hadewijch discovers a dark-side to this bivalency. Hadewijch experiences God sometimes as Tormentor through His madness, painfully and *brutally* so, as was said. Commenting on these passages from de' Pazzi in his book, *Fire From Heaven*, Harvey Cox notes that de' Pazzi's words represent "a somewhat muted expression of erotic mysticism." Cox is spiritually edified with de' Pazzi's running about frantically, "raving" and repeating over and over again the word, "Love." He contrasts de' Pazzi's religious mannerisms and charisms with our relatively staid contemporary religious manner. Cox notes that he

cannot imagine that it [de' Pazzi's mannerisms] would be permitted in Catholic churches, even ones bearing the name of Mary Magdalene, to say nothing of the local Presbyterian or Baptist congregation.⁸⁷

Alphonsus De Liguori (1696 - 1787), though appearing on the mystical scene some time after Teresa, is an important focal point to consider. Liguori solidifies the tradition on divine and religious madness. He locates some of his inspiration in de' Pazzi, Teresa's Italian near-contemporary, and builds upon de' Pazzi's themes when discussing the self-sacrifice of Jesus upon the Cross in his book, *The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ*. For Liguori, the Cross of Jesus was a display of "folly" and madness,

⁸⁶ de' Pazzi, Cited in *The Soul Afire*, 342.

⁸⁷ Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-first Century* (Don Mills, ON: Addison-Wesley, 1995), 207, 208.

of loving to the point of death that human fallenness which does not merit such a display of love. But the kind of madness as Jesus possesses morally demands identification on our part. Furthermore, our becoming *mad* in turn takes on a *moral imperative*.

Thy spouse [de' Pazzi] was indeed right when she called Thee mad with love. And does it not indeed seem a folly that Thou shouldst choose to die for love of me, for so ungrateful a worm as I am...? But if Thou, my God, art thus become mad, as it were, for the love of me, how is it that I do not become mad for the love of a God?

This notion of moral imperative is reiterated later in the same text, a notion which Liguori further roots in his reading of 1 Cor 1:23. In Corinthians, Jesus Crucified is portrayed as an obstacle for Jews and folly to Gentiles.

It is impossible that a soul which believes and thinks on the Passion of the Lord should offend Him and not love Him, nay, rather that it should not run into a holy madness⁸⁸ of love, at seeing God, as it were, mad for love of us.

In *The Incarnation, Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*, Liguori has recourse to Aquinas, Gregory Nazianzen, and again de' Pazzi, and at one point relates Gregory and de' Pazzi.⁸⁹ In this text of Liguori, God is treated as excessive in His love, thus mad. God is so mad as to allow us to become in some fashion His *god*, all through His ability to love without condition and in loving totally. Referring to Aquinas, Liguori writes:

Yes, indeed, writes St. Thomas, God loves man just as if man were His god, and as if without man He could not be

⁸⁸ Alphonsus De Liguori, *The Passion and the Death of Jesus Christ*, trans. ?, ed. Eugene Grimm (Brookings, SD: OBL Victory Mission, 1983 reprint), 40, 388.

⁸⁹ Alphonsus De Liguori, *The Incarnation, Birth and Infancy of Jesus Christ*, trans. ?, ed. Eugene Grimm (Toronto, ON: Redemptorist Fathers, 1927), 395.

happy: "as if man were the god of God Himself, and without him He would not be happy."⁹⁰

Liguori then proceeds to Gregory, suggesting in a qualified sense that God loves to the point of losing self-control: it is as if God must love so *excessively* or "exceedingly", that He has no freedom to do otherwise (since to do less would not be so free).⁹¹

Gregory of Nazianzen adds, moreover, that God, for the love He bears to men, seems beside Himself: "We are bold to say it, God is out of Himself by reason of His immense love."⁹²

Piously, Liguori speaks of this divine mad-love as paralleling moral defect in humans:

Thy sin is love.⁹³

3. Medical Definitions of Psychological Madness

Every nation thinks its own madness normal.⁹⁴

The purpose of this section is to examine the changing face of madness in Western non-religious culture from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance, with a special focus upon Spain. This will provide for a better appreciation of Teresa of Avila's discussion of mystical madness by permitting further contextualization.

⁹⁰ See Aquinas' *Opusc.* 63, c 7. Liguori, *Incarnation*, 15.

⁹¹ Liguori, *The Incarnation*, 47.

⁹² Refer to *De Div. Nom.* c 4. Liguori, *The Incarnation*, 391.

⁹³ Liguori, *The Incarnation*, 375.

⁹⁴ Santayana, "Dialogues in Limbo," *The Philosophy of Santayana*, ed. Irwin Edman (New York, NY: Modern Library, 1936), 453.

The notion of madness has not remained fixed throughout the centuries, but has allowed for degrees of variance in diagnosis and definition. It is this fluidity in the understanding of psychological madness which I should like to address and scrutinize here. In making this examination, I will not be unearthing or exposing any new historical or sociological discoveries. Indeed, I shall be confining my study primarily to secondary sources. For, this section is a synopsis of leading historical and sociological works dealing with abnormal or deviant thought and behavior. What shall be included with the synopsis is an interpretation of these materials, with the hope of evaluating the causes for the shifts in the concept of madness. According to George Becker, the label "mad" has functioned at times "as a means of social control" allowing for the "enforcement" of socially contrived "rules" which, in turn, often "reflect self-serving purposes."⁹⁵

This section shall, then, proceed by examining the predominant definitions of madness for the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Included will be a summary of the causes which were believed at the time to be instrumental in the formation of mental affliction. An evaluation of the reasons behind these definitions will follow each synopsis. The portion dealing with the Renaissance will consider, in part, Teresa of Avila's understanding of the nature, causes and consequences of melancholia. A summary of the historiography presented will complete this study.

⁹⁵ George Becker, *The Mad Genius Controversy: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1978), 17.

A. The Medieval Period

When discussing the Medieval Period, medical historians and sociologists disagree as to the interchangeability between the various supernatural and psycho-physiological determinations for the causes of mental affliction. John Howells maintains that confusion often existed between possession and insanity.⁹⁶ That is, many of the insane were thought to be possessed and so were treated as either the unwitting victims of the demonic or as willing vehicles (witches). Howells nuances his position by adding that in Spain "the least number of witches" were "burned or punished;" "they [the Spanish] simply considered them to be sick."⁹⁷ Franz Alexander and Sheldon Selesnick argue the lack of sophistication regarding the medieval mind. Based on the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487), Alexander and Selesnick maintain that "any unknown disease" was dismissed as caused by the demonic wiles of "witchcraft."⁹⁸ Somewhat inconsistently, both recall that Arnold of Villanova (1240 - 1313), from the "French school of Montpellier," advised a dual treatment for mania: both exorcism and the drainage of cranial fluid.⁹⁹ Arnold allowed for either demonic or organic origins to mental illness, or both. George Rosen points out that during the 15th century,

⁹⁶ John G. Howells, MD, *World History of Psychiatry* (New York, NY: Brunner, 1975), 104.

⁹⁷ Howells, *World History*, 104.

⁹⁸ Franz G. Alexander, MD and Sheldon T. Selesnick, MD, *The History of Psychiatry* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1966), 68.

⁹⁹ Alexander and Selesnick, *History of Psychiatry*, 66.

not all physicians...were inclined to accept the existence of possession, and some denied it altogether.

Rosen goes on to explain that when the manifest symptoms of the medieval patient were "too bizarre or too far beyond their past experience," those in the medical profession would hasten toward "supernatural explanations."¹⁰⁰

Irvin Silverman holds that the medieval mind was not necessarily all that naive or simplistic in reducing mental illness to one causality, namely possession. Silverman maintains that it is wrong to assert that everyone persecuted for witchcraft was in actuality mentally ill due to psycho-physiological causes. Rather, he believes a number were mis-diagnosed as insane by reason of supposed demonic possession. Silverman is clear that not all instances where one was labelled as *possessed* or a *witch* also carried an attached label of *mad*:

Mental illness, then, would have had to have been a highly sociopolitically selective affliction.¹⁰¹

But Silverman notes that "detention" and "years of mental and physical torture" did, in fact, lead to psychopathology among condemned witches.¹⁰² Michel Foucault argues that passion was seen as "the basis" of -- that is, linked with -- madness. It was the activity of these passions that "dispersed" the humors throughout the body. Hence, Foucault hastens to ally madness with

¹⁰⁰ George Rosen, MD, PhD, *Madness in Society: Chapters in the Historical Sociology of Mental Illness* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968), 146.

¹⁰¹ Irvin Silverman, *Pure Types Are Rare: Myths and Meanings of Madness* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1983), 33.

¹⁰² Silverman, *Pure Types Are Rare*, 34.

immorality as the mindset of the Middle Ages. Miserliness, slander, drunkenness, debauchery and adultery could be seen as related to madness.¹⁰³ In the autobiography of Margery Kempe, Kempe, via an amanuensis, recalls that she was judged in contrary ways. Her *gift* of compunction, her wailing and her emotional outbursts were subject to constant scrutiny. Some of those who witnessed her style of enthusiasm viewed her as possessed, some as deranged, some as intoxicated by liquor, some as retarded, and still others as spiteful, heretical or pseudo-mystical. Yet, there were those who viewed her as blessed by God. Kempe, for example, name-drops Julian of Norwich (Dame Jeylan) as one of her confidants and supporters.¹⁰⁴

The medical texts of the day make several interesting conclusions regarding the subject of mental illness. For example, Arnaldo de Villanova (1250 - 1303), a Spaniard, believed that mania was due to a "defect of the anterior ventricle of the brain;" that is, that there was an underlying physical abnormality to mania. Villanova argued that melancholia was caused by an "animal spirit which produces fear, sadness and dumbness." This *spirit* could be agitated by certain foods, in particular, wine. Again, excessive emotion, study, or "a retention of the menstrual flow or corrupted

¹⁰³ Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Richard Howard (New York, NY: Vantage, 1988), 86-88, 27. I have opted for the abridged translation of the original *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* because of the accessibility and popularity of the English edition, and since I am not critically examining Foucault himself, *per se*.

¹⁰⁴ Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B.A. Windeatt (Toronto, ON: Penguin, 1985), 105, 98, 64, 76-81.

sperm" could trigger melancholia.¹⁰⁵ Apparently siding with Foucault, Alexander and Selesnick write that Cristobel de Vega (c. 1510) "described mania, melancholia, and erotomania, which he approached by *moral* treatment." In effect, Alexander and Selesnick suggest Vega proposed the existence of a moral connection with mental illness, i.e., excessive emotionalism. Hence, *upright living* was believed by some to effect a cure, or at least a containment, of the affliction.¹⁰⁶

Foucault proposes that the underlying reason for a medieval determination of madness was based on one person's perception of another person as being a "prisoner of the beast;" i.e. the second person is perceived as overwhelmed by the passionate side of his/her human nature. This *imprisonment* was thought due to a prior and then coexistent surrender to and a "corruption in" sin. The afflicted person was seen as tormented under the "reign of Satan." The delirium, hallucinations etc. bespoke a "forbidden wisdom" harkening back to the *Tree of Knowledge* found in Genesis. Foucault recalls the illustration in Josse Bade's *Stultiferae naviculae* which depicts the mast of the *ship of fools* as Eden's notorious tree.¹⁰⁷ Foucault continues by insisting that the medieval position which links sin to madness eventually led to Erasmus' charge in the Renaissance that arrogance and "presumptions" gave birth to madness. As Foucault further argues,

¹⁰⁵ Howells, *World History*, 104.

¹⁰⁶ Alexander and Selesnick, *History of Psychiatry*, 117.

¹⁰⁷ Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 20, 22.

madness according to the medieval mind did not lead to "unreason," but "unreason" was the "underlying realm" of madness.¹⁰⁸ But Erik Midelfort does not want us to take Foucault's reference to the ship of fools literally: that is, that in the medieval period there were mass exportations of those persons deemed insane.

But we should recognize from the outset that there were no real ships of fools. Even the sources cited by Foucault demonstrate merely that towns occasionally got rid of a foreign lunatic by sending him home on a boat or a wagon.¹⁰⁹

When discussing the concept of madness found within the Middle Ages, the following, I believe, should be taken into consideration. First, those deemed insane could be publically punished by whipping which was, according to Rosen, "a punishment for behavior considered outrageous, malicious, or sacrilegious." Rosen refers to St. Thomas More's *Dialogue of Comfort* of 1533 to support his assertion.¹¹⁰ If flogging mad people was intended not only as a retributive punishment but also an attempt at reform, either or both of the following assumptions were necessary: (a) That madness was in the reach of rational control. Therefore, the sacrilegious were responsible for their actions to some degree, and also in some fashion responsible for their own return to sanity. (b) That such *alternative* behaviors could be kept in check by a forced appeal to instinct via pain. Since there was a desire to reform the behavior

¹⁰⁸ Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 27, 83.

¹⁰⁹ H.C. Erik Midelfort, "Madness and the Problems of Psychological History in the Sixteenth Century," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 12 (#1 1981): 6.

¹¹⁰ Rosen, *Madness in Society*, 140.

of those deemed insane as well as a desire to reform their thoughts, most likely there was a fundamental conviction among some persons that willfulness was involved in madness. Madness was the will, thus the mind, gone astray. If Foucault is right, then mental illness was the will descending to passion rather than ascending to virtue.¹¹¹ Was madness, consequently, the *natural* conclusion for moral decadence, or a divinely merited scourge as in the biblical affliction of King Nebuchadnezzar with madness (Dn 4:28-31)? Henry Charles Lea, in *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, states that those persons thought insane could be hauled before the Inquisition if they uttered "heretical words." For, it was felt that the insane had within their power the ability to muster "contrition" and to seek "reconciliation."¹¹² John of Brevicoxa in *De fide et ecclesia* (1375) linked sanity with profession of the Catholic faith, thus insanity could be tied to an inability to make such a profession.¹¹³ Hence, it is not an empty metaphor when both Pope Gregory XI and John Wycliffe called each other, and anyone else who did not conform to conventional regional codes or religious belief and devotion, *mad*.¹¹⁴ There was an

¹¹¹ Passion and virtue seen as opposites.

¹¹² Lea does not specify whether the insane had to be lucid or not, both as to their utterances or to their contrition. Henry Charles Lea, *A History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages*, vol 1 (New York, NY: Harper, 1900), 450.

¹¹³ John of Brevicoxa, *De fide et ecclesia*, As in *Forerunners of the Reformation*, ed. Heiko A. Oberman, trans. Paul L. Nyhus (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1966), coll. and ed. Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 299, 307.

¹¹⁴ Pope Gregory XI, *Pope Gregory XI to the Masters of Oxford: On Wyclif*, As in *England in the Time of Wycliffe*, ed. E.P. Cheney (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania, 1895), coll. and ed. Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 271. John Wycliffe,

obvious non-objective element present in the medieval determination of insanity fed, *in part*, rightly or wrongly, by moral and religious codes of conduct and thought. A subjective margin of deviance in religious practice and belief was often a determinant in the labelling of *insane*, as it can be today.¹¹⁵ This is noticeable in the life of Margery Kempe, and in the remarks of John of Brevicoxa and later, Lea. As we have seen, it would be reductionist to insist that the people of the Middle Ages believed there to be one cause for insanity, or one sort of person to be singled out as *insane*. In particular, the medical and religious communities were sophisticated enough to make distinctions between causalities, even though diagnoses could be wanting. Perceptions of real or imagined physiological abnormality, possession by demons, hedonism, excessive emotional displays, heresy, as well as the circumstances and the education of the persons involved, could account for labels of *madness*.

B. The Period of the Renaissance

The Renaissance contribution to the study and treatment of mental affliction (real or mistaken) was twofold. First, there was an effort to give more weight to the position that insanity can have an organic element. Second, attempts were made to distinguish

On Indulgences, as in *Tracts and Treatises of John de Wycliffe*, ed. Robert Vaughan (London: Wycliffe Society, 1845), coll. and ed. Edward Peters, *Heresy and Authority in Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 269, 270.

¹¹⁵ See American Psychiatric Association, "Delusion", *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 765.

between symptoms and syndromes and to begin to classify such.

For centuries in the West, physicians had been discussing the effects of *humors* (still taken very literally, and not so metaphorically) upon sanity. Up to and within the Renaissance, the notion that dysfunction in dispersement of the supposed *humors* -- that is, an imbalance of humors which *originated in the body* - - could induce and sustain madness was not always so clearly held. Rather, it was often believed that the mind/reason -- and especially, the passions -- stimulated an humeral imbalance which resulted in an affliction of mind. Even as late as 1541 Theophrastus Bombastus, alias Paracelsus, had been teaching that melancholia -- a loss of reason -- was caused by the driving up of the vital spirits (humors) into the brain by the reason, and therein concentrating them. Timothie Bright (1550 - 1615) would take a different stance: the melancholic humor was seen as producing an alteration in the faculty of reason. Melancholia was of bodily origin and out of the control of the mind. Yet, Bright went on to insist that a state of scruples, also being a mental affliction, differed from melancholia in that scruples were instead rooted in the conscience.¹¹⁶ In Spain, for example, Alfonso Ponce De Santa Cruz, physician to Philip II, wrote in 1622 that the melancholic humor could attack the memory, thus causing melancholia. When attacking the womb this humor induces nymphomania, and when it assails the hypochondriacs hypochondria

¹¹⁶ Stanley W. Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression: From Hippocratic Times to Modern Times* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 83-85.

results. De Santa Cruz firmly believed mental illness to be organic according to origin.¹¹⁷

A sense of *physicalism* often colored the discussion of insanity. According to Alexander and Selesnick, Johann Weyer (Dutch, b. 1515), as an example, held that the origins of mental disturbances were not due to witches, but could be due to "natural causes."¹¹⁸ Felix Plater (1536 - 1614) was more specific: most mental infirmities originated in "brain damage."¹¹⁹ Luys Lovera of Avila, doctor to Charles V, wrote in 1540 that the "suppression" of menstruation or lochia of women may bring about melancholia.¹²⁰ As seen among the Spaniards (De Santa Cruz and Lovera, for example) and also throughout the European medical community, there was an easy alliance of gender and mental illness. This alliance occurred precisely because women were believed to be less rational than men.

Consideration of the factors leading to an occurrence of insanity was not limited to gross physiology. New to the period, external stimuli were examined more seriously for their part in the onset and protraction of insanity. Anticipating our present concern with the effects of external stress upon health, Thomas Elyot (1490 - 1546) cautioned of a "heaviness" which might weigh upon the body and affect the melancholic humors, thus inducing the state of melancholia in a given individual. Such *heaviness* might

¹¹⁷ Howells, *World History*, 110.

¹¹⁸ Alexander and Selesnick, *History of Psychiatry*, 87.

¹¹⁹ Alexander and Selesnick, *History of Psychiatry*, 75.

¹²⁰ Howells, *World History*, 109.

be caused by any number of stressful occurrences: ingratitude, death of a loved one, loss of possessions or power, frustration in job advancement, or "fate."¹²¹ Paracelsus held a contrary view. According to Alexander and Selesnick, Paracelsus maintained that "mental disease was a disturbance within the internal substance of the body and could not be considered a result of external effects."¹²² Juan Huarte de San Juan (1530 - 1592) of Spain went so far as to say that mental affliction was proportionate with "cultural advancements," thereby associating change in social environment with psychological alterations in individuals.¹²³

The second contribution of the age to the analysis of insanity was the efforts to classify symptoms and syndromes. Andrew Boorde (1490 - 1549) clearly records descriptions of hallucinations and delusions.¹²⁴ André Du Laurens (1560? - 1609) divides mind diseases into three distinct categories: "frenzy, madness, and melancholy," each with distinct symptomatology.¹²⁵ Robert Burton (1557 - 1640) plainly describes and fixes melancholia as doting without fever, involving fear and sadness without apparent cause.¹²⁶ On the other hand, Felix Platter (1536 - 1614) lumps together and confuses syndromes and symptoms. Melancholia becomes

¹²¹ Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, 81-82.

¹²² Alexander and Selesnick, *History of Psychiatry*, 86.

¹²³ Howells, *World History*, 105-106.

¹²⁴ Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, 82.

¹²⁵ Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, 87.

¹²⁶ Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, 96.

a mishmash of sadness, fearfulness, religious scruples, obsession with blasphemy, assorted ideations, fear of death, delusions, catatonia and hypochondria: what now we might distinguish as varied obsessive-compulsive behaviors and schizophrenias, among others.¹²⁷

How was insanity detected and isolated as a phenomenon in the Renaissance? Whose eccentricities were socially tolerated and whose were condemned as mad?

Girolamo Cardano took a rather singular approach. He believed that the lines of the face, when properly interpreted, could be used as a science to detect character and the hidden depths of the personality.¹²⁸ Certain features were definite correlates with madness. Such an approach as Cardano's subjective method might easily have resulted in many a misdiagnosis and many a persecution in those clients to which Cardano ministered.

But the primary criterion in the determination of insanity was the degree and manner of non-conformity with social expectation. More than in the Middle Ages, rules of conformity determined labels of insanity and the dealings with those so labelled. In the instance of the medieval Margery Kempe, we saw that the townspeople and the priests were loose in their labels of what was *ailing* her: it could be God, the devil, drunkenness or insanity. With that though, at most Margery was asked to leave towns and travel on her way. The medieval treatment of those deemed mad was colored by toleration or fear or expediency. By contrast, the Renaissance

¹²⁷ Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, 92-93.

¹²⁸ Alexander and Selesnick, *History of Psychiatry*, 82.

considered non-conformity as an embarrassment and/or problematic. Becker points out, for example, that as in earlier periods, the Renaissance tolerated the melancholia of the genius who was *socially useful* and contributed to cultural advance; such melancholia would be indulged. One could condone the flights of the crazed (real or imagined) as long as there was a *utility* to such fits. Yet, those equally eccentric but less productive were not as fortunate, and often felt the wrath of the populace:

A distinction was maintained between the sane melancholics capable of rare accomplishments and those condemned to insanity.¹²⁹

In the Renaissance, a shift in focus from the divine to the human translated into an emerging departure from supernatural to human causality in instances of supposed insanity. This humanization also, and in some sense more importantly, led to an emphasis on self-governance and self-correction, as will be seen shortly.

There was a push among a number of Renaissance physicians to attribute insanity to temporal causes. Paracelsus, mentioned above, disagreed with the clerics of the day by insisting that melancholy was not due to supernatural causes.¹³⁰ Francisco Vallis De Covarrubias (b. 1524), of Spain, insisted that there was no such thing as demonic illnesses. Melancholy and epilepsy were seen as organically induced.¹³¹ Robert Burton, of England, tied melancholia to the melancholy humor, but insisted that it could be

¹²⁹ Becker, *The Mad Genius Controversy*, 24.

¹³⁰ Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, 80.

¹³¹ Howells, *World History*, 108.

healed by both prayer and medical treatment,¹³² thus not ruling out a spiritual element to mental illness. Apparently, the move away from the supernatural led to a disbelief, in some circles, of the authenticity and efficacy of mystical experience especially during the Enlightenment. For example, Meric Casaubon wrote in his *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme* (1655) that the religious experiences of St. Ignatius of Loyola were nothing more or less than expressions of melancholia or the antics of heathen magic.¹³³

Teresa of Avila incorporated the medical theories and findings of her day with her experiential demonology. Melancholy was viewed by Teresa as a natural disorder of various degrees, more or less harmful, which may further be manipulated by the devil for his own ends.¹³⁴ Being a natural disorder, melancholy was humoral in origin.¹³⁵ And being of various degrees, not all forms of melancholy represented full-blown examples of madness; yet, madness could result if reason was not supported.¹³⁶ Teresa was also concerned about the moral implications of melancholy and insisted, based on observation, that only on occasion is the *victim* so devastatingly afflicted by the melancholy humor that he/she is not

¹³² Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression*, 97.

¹³³ Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme*, intro. Paul J. Korshin (Gainesville, FL: Scholar's Facsimiles, 1970), 281-283.

¹³⁴ *Fundaciones*, 7:2.

¹³⁵ *Fundaciones*, 7:3.

¹³⁶ *Fundaciones*, 7:2.

without some moral fault.¹³⁷ It is only during the severest episodes that Teresa acknowledged a lack of moral culpability. Therefore, both the devil and the melancholic might use said illness in order to promote willfulness.¹³⁸ This willfulness is to be resisted at all costs: melancholics, for their good and the good of those around them, are not to have their own way. Socially, Teresa observed, melancholics were sometimes given too much leeway, to the detriment of others. This over-tolerance of melancholic outbursts occurred

because it [melancholia] seems to carry with it [a license to] freedom [from any responsibility].¹³⁹

Teresa would not tolerate the coddling of these purported melancholics.

Again, Teresa required that her nuns be responsible for self-control. In some sense, as a monastic, Teresa linked self-control with living according to the prescribed monastic rhythm (the Rule and Constitutions). Deviance from this rhythm -- although the rhythm allowed for diversity in observance¹⁴⁰ -- resulted in chastisement if the nun did not take charge of herself. Melancholy could be understood, in part, as a cause of or result of lack of self-control. Melancholy was perceived also as a lack of self-

¹³⁷ *Fundaciones*, 7:2.

¹³⁸ *Fundaciones*, 7:2.

¹³⁹ *Fundaciones*, 7:8. *Porque parece que trae consigo libertad.*

¹⁴⁰ i.e. Some nuns were given more to prayer, some to manual labor; some nuns had traditional mystical experiences, others did not. Diversity in monastic expression was not a primary issue for Teresa.

renunciation expressed in disobedience.¹⁴¹ These notions tie in with Foucault's understanding of the Renaissance in which "idleness" is the *great* sin: "Sloth had become the absolute form of rebellion." While this might be explanatory of the period as a whole -- that "madness was perceived through a condemnation of idleness"¹⁴² -- contemporary interest given idleness, however, does not fully explain Teresa's concern about melancholy. For Teresa, melancholy was definitely a mental/physical phenomenon in which the mind was troubled with *aflicciones e imaginaciones y escrúpulos*.¹⁴³

Pressures towards social conformity peaked in the Renaissance. For example, the Catholic hierarchy had various Inquisitions demanding moral and ritual adherence. Luther railed against leisure, Calvin about drinking. Monarchs demanded oaths of allegiance. There was a general concern in Europe with shame of reputation and family name.¹⁴⁴ Teresa called this preoccupation "honor."¹⁴⁵ Foucault maintains that forcible confinement of non-conformists during the Renaissance was due to a "desire to avoid 'scandal'."¹⁴⁶ Rosen adds,

¹⁴¹ This renunciation is not to be reduced to exterior conformity, which though an element, is not the whole.

¹⁴² Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 56-58.

¹⁴³ "Afflictions, fancies, and scruples." *Fundaciones*, 7:10.

¹⁴⁴ Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 67.

¹⁴⁵ *La honra*; i.e. *Fundaciones*, 14:6.

¹⁴⁶ Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 66.

Rules of social conduct mingled with axioms of morality and notions of social prudery to provide a standard by which all unseemly depths of emotion were concealed and extravagances of behavior avoided.¹⁴⁷

He continues,

During the sixteenth century there appears a slowly growing tendency to place the mentally deranged¹⁴⁸ in special institutions. To a considerable degree this tendency was influenced by the social policies of the Protestant reformers and the rise of absolutist government. ...In some parts of Europe, former leper houses were used as institutions for the insane.¹⁴⁹

Teresa herself suggests a period of confinement for the severely melancholic to insure the safety (physical and moral) of the other nuns.¹⁵⁰

Yet, to say that all non-conformity merited the title of *insane* during the Renaissance is preposterous. Teresa herself earned labels of *possessed* and *heretic*, as well as *mad*. To say that non-conformists had a good chance of being considered *mad* is more accurate, I think. Still *mad*, in most locales, would have been the more desired label than *heretic*. Madness might merit confinement, heresy execution. Both titles, if given for political¹⁵¹ reasons, would be a way of rendering an opponent's theology/philosophy/civic mindedness disreputable.

¹⁴⁷ Rosen, *Madness in Society*, 166.

¹⁴⁸ Here I would qualify this statement by modifying *deranged* with the adjective, *presumed*.

¹⁴⁹ Rosen, *Madness in Society*, 142.

¹⁵⁰ *Fundaciones*, 7:7.

¹⁵¹ Here I use the term loosely, to mean partisan.

4. Evaluation

How do we make sense of all of this information? What pertinence does it have for a Teresian understanding of *madness*? It remains for me to briefly evaluate the above materials. This will, I believe, provide a contextualization and justification for Teresa's recourse to the term *madness* both in a positive fashion to denote mystical situations, as well as her negative references to pathology arising during mystical transformation.

Several of the Scriptural notions of religious madness will affect the Christian mystical tradition. Three references will seemingly stand out in their impact upon the tradition: (1) There is the notion of the Spirit of God coming upon the prophet, having the prophet prophesy in a state outside himself. (2) There is the Pauline ecstatic experience in which Paul claims to be beside himself in the heavens. (3) Along with this stands the Pauline injunction of Christians to become fools for Christ. As to divine madness, several references also take precedence: (1) The excessiveness of Trinity's/Christ's love as shown in the Passion (and Incarnation). (2) The bivalent behavior of God as perceived in the experience of Job, and variously throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. (3) The folly and bivalency or ambiguity of Jesus' public life.

We have seen, also, that religious madness is a concept not foreign to post-Apostolic Western or Eastern Christianity. Teresa, therefore, will not be viewed as idiosyncratic in raising the issues of God as mad and encounters with God as maddening. The

bivalency or ambiguity, arationality, ecstasy, excessiveness and indiscretion as perceived on the part of God, with the mystic expanded, inebriated, love-sick, disabled, outside of self, will be clearly discovered in Teresa's experience (in general) and in descriptions of her raptures (in particular). The latter will take on a sense of God encountered via a *spiritualized rape fantasy*, a *fantasy of innocence not inordinacy* which is put into play/actualized: Torn among fear, thrill and risk, Teresa will be seen as conquering and taming through humility and love the Savage God's passion to possess and enliven her whole being, He Who has the potential (by sheer force of nature) of a violator and destroyer from a human standpoint.

Another purpose of this chapter was to consider the changing face of the label *madness* -- human mental debilitation -- in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Within this chapter it was noted that the labelling of madness was open to subjective determinations. The etiology of the supposed affliction varied not only according to the kind of profession (cleric, physician) of the examiner, but also among persons of the same profession. The degree of social and religious deviance also established which persons would/would not be labelled insane, and then as how they would/would not be received by the greater populace. For the medieval period, eccentricity could be tolerated based, in part, on social utility. Fear or expediency also determined how such deviants would be labelled or treated as *insane*. Often a label of *mad* meant being driven away to another locale. For the renaissance

period, embarrassment over others' deviance or perceptions of other persons as being socially problematic contributed to judgments of *madness*. European society gave way to concerns of *honor* or rigid religious conformity which, in turn, colored popular understandings of *madness*. The more Europeans examined what constituted the nature of humanity, the more the preoccupation with the nature of madness, and either organic causality, social sin (cultural complexity) or human willfulness as elements in such purported madness.

Teresa of Avila believed in a possible exchange between organic instrumentality and demonic participation in melancholia. The melancholic is not only predisposed to melancholia, but such a condition is often aggravated by demonic involvement. For Teresa, there was a spectrum of melancholic madness (what we would now say, from neurotic to psychotic). Full-blown melancholia still could, in Teresa's mind, allow for moral determinations, and hence, moral consequences. But, as should be noted, according to Teresa not every episode of melancholia had ethical ramifications; Teresa confessed that melancholics may have periods when they lack complete control.

Chapter Two: Human Transformation and Incidence of Spiritualized Madness

Nevertheless there always remains an element of madness in the spiritual encounter.¹

Introduction

This section on human transformation is multi-purposed. The initial intent is to outline the two processes of *spiritual* transformation presented here for our consideration: that of *mystical* transformation as proposed by St. Teresa of Avila, and that of *transpersonal* transformation as proposed by Michael Washburn. A more significant purpose is to evaluate the former by the latter, Teresian thought by means of contemporary transpersonal theory. I hope to answer in the affirmative the question, "Can the psychological dynamics of mystical transformation be appreciated more fully through exposition of Washburn?" Yet, even more important I plan to show, theologically, the relative *necessity* of the presence of disequilibrium and irruption in the life of the mystic. Is this linked with Teresa's usage of *mad* in reference to the mystic and in the context of encounter with God/Christ? Again, it seems proper to consider the ramifications of the Catholic notion of spiritual perfection in relation to Teresa's system and question whether perfection entails more than faith or intellectual assent and perfection in the virtues. Does perfection also entail a psychological conformity with God? Finally, it seems appropriate to raise the question as to whether Teresa may have believed God as being somehow *insane*. Thus, our psychological conformity to God

¹ Karl Stern, *The Third Revolution: A Study of Psychiatry and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1961), 160..

would be a conformity to divine *insanity*.

Finally, before I begin, a few words are necessary concerning the appropriateness of using Washburn's theories of transpersonal psychology over that of, say, Ken Wilber's, the alternative leading theorist in the field of transpersonal theory. It should be known that there are fundamental disagreements between the two theorists. First, Washburn proposes a spiral progression -- a gradual periodic resumption of psychic *castoffs*, that is, revisiting and reworking psychological imperfections² -- while Wilber enlists a sequential or linear model which seems to leave past issues unanswered. Wilber believes that significant elements of the personality are left behind in each progression of personality, which seems contradictory when integration involves the coming-to-the-fullest-of-one's-true-self. Having said this, I do not mean to insist that Washburn idealizes the process of integration: Washburn is the first to admit that all integrations are not perfect, or that some integrations abort, as will be seen. While Wilber adamantly holds to his position, and furthermore claims that his own paradigm

has the added advantage of being supported in most essential respects by both the majority of the perennial traditions and the bulk of modern psychological developmental theory,³

² The notion of a spiral paradigm is supported by clinicians. See for example, Alexander Lowen, MD, *Fear of Life* (New York, NY: Collier, 1980), 140-149. James Fowler also provides a spiral paradigm for faith development, requiring the continual "reworking of the contents of one's previous faith..." James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York, NY: Harper, 1981), 275.

³ Ken Wilber, "Two Patterns of Transcendence: A Reply to Washburn," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 30 (Summer 1990): 134.

still Washburn's system also takes these same religious traditions into consideration. In doing so, this continues to make Washburn's theories appealing for doing religious and theological study. Finally but not exclusively, Wilber disagrees with Washburn on the notion of regression. Wilber grossly misrepresents Washburn's notion of "regression in the service of ego" with the Dynamic Ground. Wilber treats Washburn's regression as a simple return to the preegoic structure of the Dynamic Ground. Rather, Washburn proposes regression as a variant recapitulation to the Dynamic Ground which, retaining elements from the preegoic stage, has a different structure and meaning than in the preegoic period; the Dynamic Ground has had a parallel development with the ego, though in a state of *captivity*. Thus, Washburn is insistent that the Ground of the personality is *dynamic*, not static. Wilber also insists that Washburn does not provide for regression in every period of development. As will be seen, according to Washburn each period has its regressive aspects precisely because his paradigm is spiral. The term *regression*, though, is reserved by Washburn for that period in human development most marked by negative irruption and disequilibrium. Again, Washburn is careful not to idealize regression, acknowledging that regressive activity may just as well be pathological and not psychologically redemptive. Washburn's notion of regression proves itself to be quite balanced.⁴

⁴ See, for example, Michael Washburn, "Two Patterns of Transcendence," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 30 (#3, 1990): 84-112; Michael Washburn, "The Pre/Trans Fallacy Reconsidered," *Revision* 19 (Summer 1996): 2-10; Ken Wilber, "Two Patterns of Transcendence," 113-136. While there is more literature on the subject, I have confined my citations and observations to these sources for the purpose of being illustrative.

1. Mystical Transformation According to Teresa of Avila's *Las Moradas*

Enthusiasm and insanity bear such close affinity, that the shades are often too indistinct to define which is one and which the other.⁵

In order to capture the mature thought of Teresa regarding the process of mystical transformation, I will concentrate on Teresa's *Las Moradas*. I will only supplement my work with earlier Teresian references to religious madness when not sufficiently covered in *Las Moradas*. Also, though not excluding *Mansions* 1 - 3, I will spend more time with Teresa's *Mansions* 4 - 7, since it is here that mystical transformation becomes quite evident.

A. Mansions 1 - 3

Having realized some void or vacancy, some sense of emptiness for which the world cannot supply, whether through positive or negative intuitions (I:1:8),⁶ the soul comes to the awareness that *la puerta para entrar en este castillo es la oración*: "the doorway by which to enter this castle is prayer" (I:1:7). Yet, such souls remain deceived by illusions of the senses and the numerous delusions of the marketplace, as much or more so than their first illuminations. These persons are essentially divided (I:1:8; also I:2:12). They are readily able to dissociate. Hence, morally, these potential mystics do not usually escape serious offense against God, neighbour and self (I:2:1): the intuitions do not

⁵ George Man Burrows, *Commentaries on the Causes, Forms, Symptoms and Treatment, Moral and Medical, of Insanity*, Cited in *The Faber Book of Madness*, ed. Roy Porter (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), 171.

⁶ To avoid unnecessary footnotes, references to *Las Moradas* will be contained within the text, noting only book, chapter and section numbering.

usually touch deep enough to effect a dynamic change. (This does not mean that radical conversions do not transpire; Teresa reminds us, for example, of the conversions of the Magdalene and Paul.)⁷ Anxieties begin, here, concerning one's spiritual condition before God, yet there is often an equal pull in the opposite direction of fearing harm from the intense practice of virtue (I:2:10). Still, this does not mean that inspirations and impulses to extreme penances could not arise through demonic prompting, which practice are both disobedient to one's superior and imprudent as to health (I:2:16). Teresa cautions that those who wish to progress further should begin a retreat of sorts from the world, to pull away, to detach, to give up *las cosas y negocios nos necesarios*: "unnecessary things and business affairs." In so detaching, one should take into consideration the obligations of one's state in life when determining the proper course of action (I:2:14).

Mansion 2 is slightly more progressive than Mansion 1, and yet it is a state which lacks firm commitment. Regression to the first stage is a regular occurrence (II:1:2). Demonic temptations try to turn the soul back: fear of illness; attachments to position, friends and family (II:1:3). By the same token, the soul is further inspired as to the vanity of its attachments and the unfoundedness of its fear. It begins to practice the presence of God (II:1:4). The devil unleashes hell: confusing it, discouraging it, contradicting it, trying its faith and patience and so forth.

Todo el infierno juntará para hacerle tornar a salir

⁷ *Camino* (Valladolid) 40:3.

*fuera.*⁸ II:1:5)

While there are sweetnesses (*regalos*: "presents") coming from God, there are also dissatisfactions and temptations (II:1:7).

But this *unleashing of hell* should be put into context. Simply, the sufferings here are infantile in comparison to the desolations and assaults of Mansion 6.

Mansion 3 is a state of regulated piety: attention to avoiding occasion of venial sin, right use of time to allow for prayer and good works, as well as modesty of speech and dress (III:1:5). Spiritual dryness and melancholy may enter here (III:1:6), as well as an interior "sourness" (*desabrimiento*) (III:2:10). Their apparent purpose is growth in the dispositions of humility (III:1:7, 9), determination (III:1:7) and perseverance (III:1:8). When tried in some minor fashion, the near-mystics' sense of suffering is distorted; their understanding of the severity of their sufferings is exaggerated (III:2:1). Thus, they may be temporarily inconsolable (III:2:2). Penances are discreet, too discreet -- or *tanto seso* ("too brainy") (III:2:8) -- according to Teresa, so that such persons seem to plod along in a false sense of safety: love has not transformed into *religious madness*:

No está aún el amor para sacar de razón. (III:2:7)⁹

Love must venture into the realm of the *a-rational*: the insecure, the unpredictable, the non-circumspect. That is, love must become *excessive*. Of those seeking perfection, if humility does not begin

⁸ "All of hell will come together in order to make it alter [its course so as] to go back outside."

⁹ "By then love still [fails] to take [the soul] out from [under] reason."

to grow Teresa fears the pious will be stuck in this mansion for their whole lives (III:2:9). In this freeing from reason, Teresa is reminiscent of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. McGinn notes that "Bernard was interested in inculcating vehement love in his readers."¹⁰ McGinn cites from Bernard's *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 9:2:

...sed praeceptis amor nec iudicium praestolator, non
consilio temperatur, nec pudore frenatur, nec rationi
subicitur.¹¹

B. Mansion 4

It is proper to begin a discussion on mystical transformation here, in the fourth mansion, since as Teresa writes,

Porque comienzan a ser cosas sobrenaturales. (IV:1:1).¹²

Having said this, Teresa again notes that most mystics, who eventually proceed forward, have spent most of their lives in the first three mansions. But she is not emphatic concerning this point, noting that God does as He pleases: *No es regla cierta*: "There is no fixed rule." (IV:1:2) This notion is repeated in VI:11:1. Mansion 4, as mystical state, is a period with bivalent features, of positive and negative phenomena. Tears may be a

¹⁰ Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1996), 203.

¹¹ "A love which is headlong does not wait upon discretion, is not tempered by counsel, is not curbed by propriety, nor is under the domain of the faculty of reason." St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sermones super Cantica Canticorum* 9:2, *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, vol 1, ed. Jean LeClerq (Rome: Editions Cistercienses, 1957-), 43. Cited in Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1996), 504 (note 267). Translation is mine.

¹² "Because supernatural things commence here."

charism experienced here (IV:1:4), to be distinguished from tears brought upon by anxiety (IV:1:5) or one's nature or disposition (*disposición*) (IV:1:6), which also may occur here. Generally, these charismatic tears are tears of compunction: tears over the Passion or over one's sins (IV:1:6). Even divinely originating tears (though cooperated in and *colored* by the mystic) may result in severe headaches (IV:1:6), as well as chest constriction and dramatic bodily gesticulation (IV:2:1). Since this is a period of momentum in comparison with the first three states, Teresa warns of several pitfalls/dangers: interior trials, melancholy, poor physical health, cessation of prayer, which are due, in part, to a misunderstanding of self. For, there is often an impatience with the spiritual faculties as they scurry about during efforts at recollection, and one deceives one's self into thinking that God is so far removed, or that one has been wasting his/her time doing little or nothing. This impatience might even extend to the body, in which caring for basic functions or needs is seen as a burden or chore (IV:1:11). (I might add that this impatience seems to mask a deeply rooted self-hatred.)

In this mansion the prayer of quiet is also manifested (IV:2:2): a recollection caused by God, and bearing the marks of "peace and quiet": *paz y quietud*. These, after the prayer of quiet has finished, extend even to the body with "sweetness": *suavidad*. (IV:2:4). During this form of prayer the will is somehow united with God's will (IV:2:8). Teresa -- half sarcastically, half seriously -- warns that those of weak constitutions could die

from various unions with God (VI:4:1). Fears of ill-health and penance are lost because of the effects of this prayer (IV:3:9), and patience in suffering becomes manifest, as well as a beginning in self-knowledge. The delights of the world are seen as "dung": *basura*. Addiction to the delights of *quiet* may lead one to overtax oneself in prayer, and this may lead to empty absorptions. In turn, these absorptions pose threats to one's physical health (IV:3:11). Teresa repeats her concern about these absorptions in VI:7:13, and claims they are dangerous to the mind as well as the brain. There is also a bit of love-sick play ("pining": *caimiento*) which might bring about an irregularity of eating and sleeping (IV:3:12-13). Again, persons with more creative or fanciful minds may even hallucinate over religious subjects, confusing such hallucinating with authentic visions or apparitions (IV:3:14).

C. Mansion 5

Few persons actually progress this far, Teresa relying upon Mt 22:14 in making this assertion (see also V:3:6).¹³ Here prayer of sleep or union (*unión*) (V:2:1) occurs: the faculties are gradually quieted, attention is focused, contemplation of God is obscure (V:1:4-5), and the exterior senses are deadened (V:1:9). Frohlich refers to this prayer as a form of "bare consciousness" or "death."¹⁴ Yet, Frohlich confuses the death-aspect present in this

¹³ "Many are called, few are chosen."

¹⁴ Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 312-313.

phenomenon with the prerequisite mortification needed to equip the personality for this condition of bare consciousness.¹⁵ Speaking elsewhere of the state of union, Teresa refers to being changed so much into God that the mystic is brought to a madness, or enters into a state of inebriation: *un santo desatino*: "a holy folly," quite full as it is of divine joy. The soul is so beyond the confines of standard human reason, so absorbed, somewhat frenzied, interiorly manic in delight, and completely overwhelmed.¹⁶

Teresa is very descriptive of this folly-phenomenon co-transpiring with the prayer of sleep, reminiscent as it is of the medieval religious phenomenon of *jubilatio*. John Ruysbroeck, in *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage*, writes about impulses to "cry out with a loud voice," of being given to "cries of joy."

And this is called Jubilus, or jubilation;¹⁷...a joy which cannot be uttered in [discernable] words.

The earlier Teresa calls the prayer of sleep a state of "glorious folly" (*un glorioso desatino*) or "celestial madness" (*una celestial locura*)¹⁸ or a "holy madness" (*una santa locura*).¹⁹ It is a prayer-form in which the intellect is expanded and illumined with a "real wisdom" (*la verdadera sabiduría*) which is both imparted by

¹⁵ Donald Blais, OCDS, *Frohlich's Application of Kohut's Self-Psychology to Teresa of Avila in The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic* (Presentation: Eastern International Region of the American Academy of Religion, LeMoyne College, Syracuse, NY, April 13, 1996), 10.

¹⁶ *Meditaciones* 4:4.

¹⁷ John Ruysbroeck, *The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage; The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, The Sparkling Stone, The Book of Supreme Truth*; trans. C.A. Wynschenk Dom (London: John W. Watkins, 1951), 69, 77.

¹⁸ *Vida* 16:1.

¹⁹ *Vida* 16:4.

God and deeply enjoyed by the soul.²⁰ Within, the person is almost compelled to shout out praises of/to God: the soul is said to be *no cabe en sí* ("out of one's self") with *un desa sosiego sabroso* ("a naughty restlessness").²¹ The mystic is so psychically charged as to speak in ecstatic-like tongues (verbal or written),²² and it is these charismatic tongues which are the substance of *jubilatio*. In this way Teresa believes the soul capable of being made *mad* by God's love, God's essence: i.e., God is maddening to the soul (if not mad Himself?). Hence Teresa dialogues with God:

*Me hacéis esta merced -, que o estén todos los que yo
tratare locos de vuestro amor.*²³

And to her director she writes:

*Suplico a vuestra merced seamos todos locos, por amor de
quien por nosotros se lo llamaron.*²⁴

This form of prayer, this *sleep* is to Teresa a type of *spiritual sickness*,²⁵ one from which Teresa hoped at the time not to be cured, that it would be a means of freeing those who receive it from spiritual/moral circumspection/timidity²⁶: i.e., lead them into an excess of love. And what is Teresa's excess of love but a

²⁰ *Vida* 16:1.

²¹ *Vida* 16:3.

²² *Vida* 16:4.

²³ "I make this plea -- that You treat all of these [persons so afflicted by this prayer] like madmen of Your Love." *Vida* 16:4.

²⁴ "I beseech your reverence that we should all be madmen, for love of Him Who for us was Himself so called [one]." *Vida* 16:6.

²⁵ *Vida* 16:6.

²⁶ *Vida* 16:7.

love which is unconditional, daring in displays and enterprise, all-consuming of one's attention, not bound to the *honourable* thing...? For we know what Teresa felt about concern for the worldly opinions and estimations of others, of our reputation in their eyes: our *honour*. Honour to Teresa is nothing short of a *gran mal* ("great evil"), a *pestilencia* ("pestilence").²⁷

This mansion also includes periods of interior peace while suffering exteriorly. Because the mystic has not reached conformity with God's will, there is *pena* ("pain") at not being able to do more for God by way of bringing others to Him (V:2:10). This pain is also extended to anguish at seeing God offended. It is so extreme that it may only be partially alleviated by *grandes penitencias* ("great penances"). Such pain seems never-ending (V:2:14). I cannot help but comment that it appears *some* -- yet it would be reductionist to assert *all* -- of the pain is due to a hidden grandiosity, an inflation of self-importance. Even Teresa implies that such suffering may not always come from God but may issue from the self (V:3:4).

D. Mansion 6

This is the mansion of betrothal (VI:5:11) or *perfecta contemplación* ("perfect contemplation") (VI:7:11). It is a dynamic period of great blessings and numerous secondary manifestations, both deconstructive and constructive, of dismantling and reassembling interior structures, relationships, attitudes,

²⁷ *Camino* (Valladolid) 7:11.

behaviours, habits.

Teresa begins forthrightly, by insisting that the door to Mansion 7 is that of severe trials, interior and exterior (VI:1:1-2). She gives the following as examples: social intrigue (VI:1:5), condemnation (VI:1:3), physical illnesses that somehow torment the soul as well as the body (VI:1:6), unexplainable interior sufferings (VI:1:7), an absence of consolation from God (VI:1:13) and varied demonic assaults (VI:1:14). These trials carry with them the real risk of insanity (VI:1:14).

There are also many positive experiences which transpire within this mansion. For example, Teresa discusses *wounds of love* (VI:2:2), which smite the person with an intensely painful kind of love-sickness (VI:2:4). Locutions also arise here, which Teresa warns should be distinguished from their counterparts of demonic locutions, imagined locutions or locutions due to mental illness (VI:3:1). With authentic locutions come excessive demonic fears of deception (VI:8:9). Again, there are intellectual visions (VI:3:12; VI:5:8; VI:8:1ff), imaginary visions (VI:4:5), raptures (violent forms of ecstatic-like prayer, to be discussed in detail in chapter three of the dissertation) (VI:4:1ff), and flights of spirit (other variants of ecstatic-like experience treated in an appendix to this dissertation) (VI:5:1). In *Way of Perfection*, Teresa notes that raptures may indeed seem to take one completely out of oneself -- out of body, out of mind -- to a state of ecstatic madness:

*que casi la sacaba de sí con arrobamientos.*²⁸

In *Fundaciones*, rapture²⁹ is denoted as a *locura sabrosa*, a "spicy/daring madness."³⁰ For, during rapture, the mystic is totally carried out of him/herself, made totally *mad*.³¹ In respect to this *religious madness*, Teresa goes at length to distinguish those given to this phenomenon from the melancholic whom Teresa calls *locos* ("the insane").³² The melancholic are absorbed outside of times of meditation or contemplation. Their absorption is a symptom of a defect of personality.³³ They are fixated upon their own imaginations or devices of their imaginations, and as such are ego-centric and self-ingratiating. In *The Way of Perfection*, Teresa considers rapture, in part, for its utility regarding spiritual love-sickness. Teresa notes that enduring instances of love-sickness must be relieved by rapture. Raptures must provide a respite from pining-away through a peaking or satisfaction of one's spiritual passion. Otherwise, unrequited spiritual love-sickness has been known to end in physical death. Teresa implies that she is aware of instances where this has happened.³⁴ Returning to *Interior Castle/The Mansions*, we should

²⁸ "that she was very nearly drawn out of herself with raptures." *Camino* (Valladolid) 19:8.

²⁹ *Fundaciones* 6:4.

³⁰ *Fundaciones* 6:7.

³¹ *Fundaciones* 28:31.

³² *Fundaciones* 1:2ff.

³³ *Fundaciones* 6:7.

³⁴ *Camino* (Valladolid) 19:8.

not pass over the form of rapture known as *un golpe*, "a blow," consisting of a sudden wound and shock to the whole system, which not only has all the other features of *los arrobamientos de contento* (raptures, as they are generally understood), but with the addition of excruciating agony (primarily interior). Teresa likens the phenomenon to Purgatory due to the violence and suffering of the experience; it is said that the encounter puts the mystic, again, in a proximity to death (VI:11:3-4).

There are some obvious effects to these mystical experiences if they are indeed authentic, and if they have been utilized and incorporated in one's spirituality in a humble manner. First, Teresa notes that missionary zeal increases, as well as the courage to suffer (VI:6:3-4). There is the desire to avoid imperfections (VI:6:3). Tears, again, may be present, but must be distinguished from tears due to psychological imbalances (*humors*; "humors") which presumably are possible in this mansion as well (VI:6:7; also VI:6:8-9). Also, there are *ímpetus de alegría* ("impulses of mirth") which make the mystic act in a way perceived by others as crazed. Referring to St. Peter of Alcántara, Teresa writes

Y le tenían por loco los que alguna vez le oyeron.
(VI:6:11)³⁵

Teresa calls the state induced by these impulses as *buena locura* - - "good madness" (VI:6:11) -- and characterizes it as a type of mild stupor (VI:6:13). In some sense it appears to be reminiscent of the prophetic madness described by Plato, and discussed in

³⁵ "And those who had heard him on some occasion [believed him] crazy."

chapter one of this dissertation. Regarding these impulses, there is the temptation to withdraw more than is necessary from human contact to try and prolong/induce these experiences (VI:7:7-8). Thus, even in this mansion, unwarranted attachments persist. Finally, Teresa makes the point that in this mansion two experiences gravely risk one's life: the pain of *un golpe* and the instances of overwhelming joy, both of which Teresa believes can cause physical death (VI:11:11). When reading the Spanish, one is able to note that Teresa is *not* being *poetic* in her words of caution.

In Mansion 6 Teresa seems to be purposely vague as to whether or in what order suffering/desolation and elation/consolation transpire. Which period occurs first or takes precedence, or do they alternate? Still, Teresa began this mansion by noting a few rough categories of trials, and scatters references to suffering or trials throughout the discussion of this mansion.

E. Mansion 7

Teresa desires that the progressing mystic should be a soul *que está abrasada de amor que la desatina*: "that is passionate in love to foolishness."³⁶ That is, excessiveness is to characterize the mystic: beyond reason, without circumspection, monomaniac (fixated on God/Christ, the Object of one's love). Definitely, an a-rational consciousness should define the state of spiritual marriage, the seventh of the mansions.

³⁶ *Meditaciones* 1:10.

This is the mansion/dwelling in which spiritual marriage is consummated (VII:1:3). The procedure leading to marriage includes an intellectual vision of the Trinity (VII:1:6), and an imaginary vision of Christ Resurrected (VII:2:1) which brings a sense of continued union (VII:2:4). This continued presence of God is not so full as to prevent the person from partaking in daily earthly affairs (VII:1:9). It is as if Martha (exterior life) and Mary (interior life) were joined in harmony (VII:1:10). While "wars" (*guerras*) still wage in the outer person, the inner person remains one with the Lord (VII:2:11).

The results of mystical marriage are given by Teresa as: (1) a forgetfulness of self and remembrance of God's honour (VII:3:2); (2) the desire to will as God wills, even if it means to suffer (VII:3:4); (3) an interior joy when persecuted (VII:3:5); (4) spiritual consolations are no longer *needed* (VII:3:8); (5) a marked desire for solitude and/or desire to benefit the souls of others even if this means social involvement (VII:3:8); (6) the desire to always walk with God uprightly -- i.e., righteous living (VII:3:9); (7) a near-constant interior peace (VII:3:10); (8) an intellectual satisfaction (VII:3:11, 14); (9) raptures generally subside (VII:3:12). There are rare regressions to previous conditions; Teresa acknowledges these regressions occur for the fostering of humility (VII:4:1-2). Again, such transformed persons still continue to commit venial sins and many first movements to sin (VII:4:3), although the Spanish, here, seems to be exaggerated in its discussion of frequency of sin. It appears that Teresa is

intentionally distancing her mysticism from the claims (real or rumoured) of the illuminists, such that a perfection may be reached in which moral decisions become indifferent.

Regarding the abandonment of sin, there appears at first sight to be a fundamental disagreement between the mystical theology of St. Symeon The New Theologian (d. 1022) and Teresa. Symeon preaches that the mystic who is married to God enters a state of *apatheia*. As George Maloney, SJ, explains, this "means literally the state of passionlessness."³⁷ This *apatheia* is the foundation for another mystical phenomenon, namely *impeccability*. As Maloney puts it,

The reason why the Christian mystic who possesses from the Holy Spirit the gift of *apatheia* is freed of sin, unaffected by evil thoughts or concupiscible movements within his fallen nature, is that the Holy Spirit has infused into him an inner knowledge of seeing all things in God's original plan.³⁸

Basing his notion of *impeccability* on 1 Jn 3: 6a ("All those who remain in Him do not sin..."), as well as Gregory of Nazianzus and John Damascene, Symeon is insisting that the transformed mystic *does not* sin, not that he/she *cannot* sin.³⁹ Teresa, herself, apparently holds to an *impeccability* -- at times wholly perfect -- such as Symeon holds. But, Teresa seems to modify Symeon's position and maintains a constant *relative* *impeccability* for

³⁷ Passionlessness is not a stoic voidance of the passions, but is comparable to an inner state of peace (as is maintained by Teresa herself). George A. Maloney, SJ., *The Mystic of Fire and Light: St. Symeon The New Theologian* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1975), 145.

³⁸ Maloney, *Mystic of Fire*, 152.

³⁹ Maloney, *Mystic of Fire*, 153.

mystical marriage: one is so united with God as never to fundamentally leave Him (via deliberated or mortal sin), but never consistently so united as to never waver (via venial sin or the first movements to sin) for long periods of time (VII:4:3). It is not impossible for the mystic to retreat from the favours which occur in spiritual marriage (VII:2:1). Neither is Teresa's *apatheia* absolutely perfect (VII:3:10). Still, Teresa is the first to note that God can do as He will (cf. IV:1:2). As Albert Farges writes,

The indissolubility or our union with God [in marriage] practically implies at least a relative impeccability -- that is to say, a powerlessness to rupture this union by mortal sin or to disturb it by venial sin committed with deliberate intention. As for the imperfections and venial faults which overtake it unexpectedly, to these the soul always remains subject.⁴⁰

Apparently, the issue of impeccability arose posthumously, when Teresa's writings were being closely examined. Alonso de la Fuente, according to Gillian Ahlgren, charged Teresa with "attributing to the soul a state of sinlessness while it was involved in this union." Yet, Ahlgren believes, and I concur, that "Teresa flatly denied sinlessness to the soul in the seventh *morada*," that is, absolute sinlessness.⁴¹

Taking Teresa to her own conclusion, there is nothing which can prevent God from bringing a personality permanently into the state of impeccability in this life -- at least, theoretically.

⁴⁰ Albert Farges, *Mystical Phenomena*, 2nd ed., trans. S.P. Jacques (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1926), 185.

⁴¹ Gillian T.W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 127, 133.

Now, for Teresa, the state of transforming union is quite rare. As I noted, Teresa maintains most pious Christians never get beyond the initial mansions, and most sincere contemplatives never reach the later mansions. But Symeon is even more discriminating. He would hold that even fewer (if only one) mystics reach the state of indefectibility in this life. This union of impeccability could be viewed as a subset of Teresa's transforming union, and in that sense both Teresa and Symeon can be reconciled: that is, only the unique mystic of transformed mystics is perfectly impeccable. Teresa dares not ascribe such a condition to herself (or anyone else), although Symeon does.

2. A Synthesis of the Personality Transformation Theories of Michael Washburn⁴²

Wisdom is an evanescent madness, when the dream still continues but no longer deceives.⁴³

We now proceed to the contemporary period. In this section, I will consider the phenomenon of psychological transformation as it may pertain to the unification of the Christian mystic with God/Christ. This will require me to examine both the process and

⁴² As this section will be based primarily upon the transpersonal theories of Michael Washburn, those of his works cited will be designated by abbreviation in the body of the paper so as to avoid unnecessary footnoting. The abbreviations are as follows: EDG = *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground*, 1st edition; EDG2 = *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground*, 2nd edition; TPPP = *Transpersonal Psychology in Psychoanalytic Perspective*; TPT = "Two Patterns of Transcendence;" HW = "Human Wholeness in Light of Five Types of Psychic Duality;" PTF = "The Pre/Trans Fallacy Reconsidered;" LTE = "Linearity, Theoretical Economy, and the Pre/Trans Fallacy". *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground*, 1st edition (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988). *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground*, 2nd edition (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995). *Transpersonal Psychology in Psychoanalytic Perspective* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1994). "Human Wholeness in Light of Five Types of Psychic Duality," *Zygon* 22 (#1, 1987). "The Pre/Trans Fallacy Reconsidered," *Revision* 19 (Summer 1996): 2-10. "Linearity, Theoretical Economy, and the Pre/Trans Fallacy," *Revision* 19 (Fall 1996): 36-37.

⁴³ Santayana, *Dialogues in Limbo, The Philosophy of Santayana*, ed. Irwin Edman (New York, NY: Modern Library, 1936), 458.

the goal of personality transformation which is, in the life of the mystic, a subsidiary of mystical transformation.

In order to achieve our goal, we will concern ourselves with outlining the transpersonal theory of Michael Washburn, offering it as one understanding of the psychological evolution of the mystic personality. Included in this delineation of transpersonal development, is a study of the risk and presence of psychological madness, or *mad* mindsets or behaviours in the mystical process. I should make it clear from the start that Washburn's theories, drawing as they do upon Christian mystical tradition, do not presuppose that everyone in the process of integration is mystically inclined. Of the integrated, Washburn notes,

Only a small minority are prophets, saints, or mystical illuminati. (EDG2, 248; EDG, 233).

A. Personality Constructs

(1) Foundational States

Washburn believes that the human personality progresses through various states or constructs. The human person is said to begin in a "neonatal" state where the ego is "undifferentiated" from the Dynamic Ground⁴⁴ as "psychic potential." It is a state

⁴⁴ The Dynamic Ground is "the source of psychic energy," the "fuel of psychic systems," which may show itself as either "libido" or "spirit." But, the "freest" expression of the Ground is as spirit. The Dynamic Ground "is an energizer of psychic systems that is not itself reducible to or exclusively expressive of any particular system or systems." It may, for example, irrupt as "the holy" which has both "light and dark sides": "ecstasies and agonies, exaltations and abasements." At the neonatal stage, the Dynamic Ground functions as the "aboriginal source from which selfhood emerges." (EDG, 110, 4, 118, 111, 115, 22) Consider that Washburn's definition of Dynamic Ground has its roots in Jung's understanding of the "life-phenomenon" of "psychic": that energy which can be liberated from its purely instinctual form and rise above biological determinism to a "spiritual form" and force, which as spirit consequently nurtures consciousness. See Carl G. Jung, "On the Nature of the Psyche," *The Structure and Dynamic of the Psyche*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960), 181-183, 207.

of "original embedment" (EDG, 17; also EDG2, 16). Here "the ego is only minimally differentiated from the Dynamic Ground" (EDG2, 15).

The next state in the developing human personality is the "preegoic" state. This construct is characterized by the "somatic," the "instinctual" and the "polymorphously sensuous." In this state of being, the "Dynamic Ground" dominates a weak and undeveloped yet emergent ego (EDG, 4). The "potentials" of the Ground are said to "overpower" the "weak and undeveloped ego" (EDG2, 16). This emergent ego then proceeds to *identify* itself with the body as a "body self or body ego" (EDG, 22). The ego will seek to emerge through the agency of "original" (EDG, 127) or "primal repression" which divides and distinguishes the ego from the "physico-dynamic life" of the human personality (HW, 75), otherwise known as the Dynamic Ground. The voice of this dynamic life is stifled through this repression, as such life is treated by the emerging ego as a potential threat (TPPP, 24). "The ego assumes a one-sided control of consciousness" (EDG2, 16).

(2) The Egoic State

During the transition to and in the "egoic" state, the ego "perpetrates" (EDG, 21) further and *continual repression* of the Dynamic Ground as the "executive agency of consciousness" (EDG2, 6). This repression is for the purpose of "insulating" the ego, which is now "mental" in identification (EDG, 5): "rational, organizing and controlling functions" (EDG, 12; see also EDG2, 6 and HW, 68). This repression is, in part, a *response* "to social

roles, norms, and values" (EDG, 5). The dynamic psychic material is summarily denied and rejected as "primitive-infantile powers, impulses, and ideations" (HW, 77). This repressed Ground, which is fundamentally dynamic -- of "power, spontaneity, and creativity" (HW 75) -- consists of a number of elements which mingle in the unconscious with the "shadow" of the personality. This "shadow" represents the "dark and disowned dimensions of the personality" and consists of a "vast number of personality fragments, half-formed alter-egos, each of which, in an unguarded moment, is capable of rising up and taking possession of the whole person" (EDG, 131-132; also EDG2, 150). In EDG2 Washburn expands his notions of the contents of the unconscious, to include: "filtering structures and operations, autonomous complexes, COEX systems,⁴⁵ ego identity,⁴⁶ defense mechanisms, subthreshold signals,⁴⁷ filtered stimuli,⁴⁸ shadow and deeply repressed materials.⁴⁹ This egoic state is said variously to continue "in more or less stable fashion until the end of life" (EDG, 5) for the majority of persons, or is understood less definitively as simply "the stage...of the longest duration" (EDG2, 6).

⁴⁵ COEX System: System of (Co)ndensed (Ex)perience. A system as defined by Stanislav Grof, in the words of Washburn, as an "early" "instance of any type of experience, if it happens to be sufficiently expressive...[which becomes] the defining instance of all subsequent experiences of that type" (EDG2, 144).

⁴⁶ That is, a "self concept" (EDG2, 145).

⁴⁷ These are signals from the body, "many of which are unfiltered or repressed by specific embedded structures...[or] are simply too faint to be noticed above the *noise* of usual egoic consciousness" (EDG2, 146).

⁴⁸ That is, material deemed "irrelevant" by "acquired habits and dispositions" (EDG2, 147).

⁴⁹ That is, usually "deeply buried materials" due to varied "traumas" (EDG2, 151; EDG2, 142).

Washburn admits of several distinct substates to this overall formation and establishment of the ego and repression of the Dynamic Ground. During the "preoedipal stage" the "toddler" begins dissociating from its primary caregiver and sensing a distinctness from said caregiver. Thus the "toddler" desires and obtains a *cautious* separation (TPPP, 51-54). Washburn terms this separation as "primal alienation" and the concurrent repression of the toddler's "nonegoic potentials" as "primal repression" which begins here (TPPP, 67).⁵⁰ The *later toddler* or "oedipal period" represents the state where the oedipal complex is resolved: "The nonegoic potentials of the psyche are [successfully]⁵¹ repressed and submerged; they are relegated to the deep unconscious and negatively interpreted as the id." (TPPP, 72). What follows is the "young child" or "latency" period where the child is "willingly acquiescent" to authority, first motivated by fear and then motivated by more positive reasons. Citing Blos, Washburn notes that the "young child" is one who lives on "borrowed ego strength." (TPPP, 96-109). Still, there is a positive side to this construct, where the "young child" experiences the world as a "playground" in which "basic ego skills" can be "mastered" (TPPP, 119). The "adolescent" phase follows "latency." It is a "transitional period" of "upheavals" of sexuality and "stirrings of nonegoic life." Here the ego is "both infused and turned in upon itself." There is a *developmental regression* of sorts, which is "nonpathological,"

⁵⁰ This "primal repression" is "consolidated" during the oedipal phase (TPPP, 11).

⁵¹ My addition. *Successful* in the sense of completeness.

resulting in the new equilibrium of "early adulthood." The "hypothetical" and the "abstract" begin to interest the adolescent. There is both "identity testing" and "identity anxiety." The adolescent must commit to an "identity project," that is a *project* of becoming or ego-development which will result in a desired "self-concept" or ego-identity sometime during young adulthood (TPPP, 123-130, 148, 151-154). Young adulthood represents a period in which the ego matures, but within "dualistic constraints and protections." The ego is both "repressively insulated from nonegoic potentials and defensively shielded from other people." Young adulthood is marked by "self-discipline" where the "ego submits to the superego as a way of asserting and establishing itself" (TPPP, 157, 166).

(3) Conversion, Meditation and the Transegoic State

Finally, there is the "transegoic" state, the "stage of integration" which begins through a "conversion" (EDG, 5). In EDG, Washburn maintains that this conversion "usually" takes place during the "middle or later years of life" (EDG, 5; see also EDG2, 6), when a person begins to question his or her "identity project" (EDG2, 174). Washburn then subtly modifies this position from EDG in *Transpersonal Psychology* by saying that the middle age group has a particular *susceptibility* to conversion. Still, he is careful to note that this period of "transition" is not of necessity allied to any particular biological age group (TPPP, 25; also 184).

This transegoic integration is nothing less than a higher

synthesis of the ego and the Dynamic Ground, with the ego being "infused and transfigured by the power of the Ground" (EDG, 20). The Ground "heals" the ego (EDG, 117). Even so, the Ground is "sovereign" in relation to the ego with the ego being submissive (EDG, 17). "The ego is a servant of the power of the Ground as spirit" (EDG2, 22). The Jungian analyst, Marie-Louise von Franz, refers to the process of unseating the ego and subjecting it to the control of what she alludes to as the *puer aeternus*, as the "humiliating experience" of the "ego submit[ting] itself to the demands of the inferior or childish part of the personality." In the process this childish part is also transformed and passes from "divine child" to "source of life."⁵²

Washburn wants us to realize that there are various ways to uncover the unconscious. According to Washburn, Freud's free association and Jung's active imagination tend to a "superficial and sporadic" contact with the unconscious. Hypnosis, drug intervention⁵³ and meditation are ways of baring the unconscious, but Washburn advocates meditation⁵⁴ as the most effective of these three, since both hypnosis and drugs "dislocate" or "drown" the ego (EDG, 140-141). Meditation psychologically *demobilizes*

⁵² Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Problem of the Puer Aeternus* (Zürich: Spring Publications, 1970), V, 3.

⁵³ Maslow suggest that "core-religious revelation" might be induced by drugs or hypnosis as a short-cut. Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (Toronto, ON: Arkana, 1994), 27.

⁵⁴ Washburn defines meditation as "receptive," that is, "sustained, nonselective alertness" (EDG, 141); or "concentrative," that is, a focus on one "specific object, idea, or other reference datum" (EDG, 142; see also EDG2, 153). These kinds of meditation have been customarily labelled in the Western Christian tradition *apophatic* and *kataphatic*. Washburn notes that not all meditation is prayer, because not all meditation is directed towards the "ultimate reality" (God/god) by way of "entreaty and submission" (EDG, 143). Yet meditation as prayer "can be used as a way of beckoning the divine" (EDG2, 155).

"structures" of repression by *dishabituation* and *suppression* or *weakening* of these "structures" (EDG, 147), or is also understood as *arresting* or *disengaging* these structures (EDG2, 160). Meditation begins with "superficial calm" but when "practiced in a disciplined way" can "render the mental ego vulnerable to a breakthrough of unwelcome repressed materials," that is, to "an encounter with the personal submerged unconscious" (EDG, 151). Meditation allows the ego "to *decrease* its hold on consciousness and thereby to open it to the unconscious" (EDG2, 159). It is for this reason that Mark Epstein cautions persons with borderline personality disorder against pursuing meditative practice, believing them incapable of weathering the unwelcome upheavals.⁵⁵

B. The Path to Numinous Being

In order to become more fully human and for the human person to experience the "ultimate disclosure" of the "divine power" (EDG 232-233), the ego *must* (TPT, 91) "regress into the nonegoic sphere" of the unconscious (EDG, 20). Washburn is careful to point out that this is not a regression in the standard sense of the term: it is

not merely a retrograde movement to earlier or more primitive modes of functioning. Nor is it a regression in the service of the ego, since the "dark night" does not serve in the long run to consolidate the ego in a position of psychic ascendancy or command (EDG, 155).

Rather, this regression is

⁵⁵ Mark Epstein, "Meditative Transformations of Narcissism," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 18 (#2, 1986), 144.

a process that disengages the ego from worldly involvements and that submits the ego, beyond its knowledge and control to the underlying physico-dynamic strata of the psyche (EDG, 155).

It may be said that during the process of regression the ego *dies*: its affectations, its attachments, its false vision, its control and manipulations must all cease within it. As such, the ego must, therefore, be stripped naked, disengaged and purged. At the highest point of its "surrender" to "divine power" (HW, 70) and purgation, it is as if the ego for a brief period collapses (EDG, 188) and is then resurrected through what the Christian would say is the life of the Spirit of God. It is a goal of the spiritual life to *transcend* an existence "centred in" and interpreted by the demands of the ego (TPT, 85). Yet, one will soon see that the process of ego-death entails its pathological-like episodes as well as the real risk of permanent mental disease.⁵⁶ There will be, as Washburn describes them, "serious setbacks and ordeals: collapses and upheavals, purgations and inflations, engulfments and losses of control" (TPT, 93).

When Washburn considers the need for regression so as to reach spiritual heights, he points out that:

Virtually every religious tradition knows of a period of protracted trial that typically attends spiritual awakening. (EDG, 155)

Concerning this period he claims to be drawing on John of the Cross, but he merges what John considers to be two distinct

⁵⁶ Indeed, not all of the regressions will be "remedial;" some, indeed may be "pathological" (TPT, 90). Also, the pathology during the numinous life (life opening to its spiritual dimensions) is not limited to periods or instances of regression, but will also include those neurotic tendencies which one brings along into the numinous quest.

phenomena, the *dark night of the senses* and the *dark night of the spirit*. According to John, these differ not only in degree but also in kind, and occur at distinct times in the spiritual life. John writes,

The purgation of the senses is solely the doorway to and beginning of the contemplation which tends towards the [purgation] of the spirit. As we have said, this [first purgation] serves more to accommodate the senses to the spirit than for union of the spirit with God.⁵⁷

In *Transpersonal Psychology*, however, Washburn revises his earlier account in ways which draw it closer to John of the Cross. He proposes the following sequence or process of integration, which will be explored successively during the remainder of this section:

(1) This stage represents a regressive conversion away from the world, followed by (though perhaps also to some extent preceded by) an alienation from the world as the person had known the world. (While Washburn passes over the penitential aspects of John of the Cross's active night, there is more than one similarity with John's active night of the senses.)⁵⁸

(2) Next, Washburn proposes a parallel stage to John's passive night of the senses, during which *God* ("a hidden power") secretly *unworlds* (TPPP, 223) the ego. (This period or dynamic seems to be for Washburn both a way of interpreting Washburn's stage (1) and a distinctive stage following (1).)

⁵⁷ *La purgación del sentido sólo es puerta y principio de contemplación para la del espíritu, que, como también habemos dicho, más sirve de acomodar el sentido al espíritu que de unir el espíritu con Dios.* John of the Cross, *Noche Oscura*, 522-523.

⁵⁸ As Joel Allison points out, conversion "taps" the *primitive unconscious*, allowing for "a new and more advanced level of personality integration and organization." Joel Allison, "Adaptive Regression and Intense Religious Experiences," *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 145 (#6, 1968), 453.

(3) After the first passive night comes immature illumination or awakening, that is, an initial re-opening of the nonegoic core, allowing the personality to gain some access to the energies of the Dynamic Ground, and which involves narcissistic inflation. (Ecstatic phenomena first occur here, though they often lead to pride and a false sense of perfection. This, in substance, is John's stage of illumination on a psychological plane.)

(4) Following upon an immature illumination is a period of regression in the service of transcendence. This period is marked by the psyche re-discovering itself, of plunging into the pre-personal emotional and spiritual unconscious. (This stage corresponds very roughly to John of the Cross's passive night of the spirit.)

(5) Regeneration in spirit is a period which abounds in visions, rapture, transport and ecstasy.⁵⁹ (Note that John conceives of these phenomena as more proper to illumination; Washburn implies the like in EDG2, 167. Washburn states that these "eruptive ecstasies" steadily convert into "composed enstasies." [EDG2, 219])⁶⁰

(6) Finally, Washburn proposes a stage of integration, which is characterized by objectless, enstatic contemplation. (A parallel can be seen with John's unitive stage.)

⁵⁹ "After a significant breakthrough, there is usually a lengthy period...during which the fruits of this breakthrough are slowly integrated into various sectors of the individual's functioning." Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (Atlanta, GA: Scholar's Press, 1993), 287.

⁶⁰ Enstasies, according to Washburn, are "dynamic absorptions," which occur during regeneration, and are not as "explosive" as ecstasies but rather "poised" and peaceful. (EDG2, 234).

C. Stages in the Process of Integration

(1) Alienation from the World through Regressive Conversion

Washburn's first regression is a conversion process (EDG, 156, 159). There is an initial "stage of withdrawal from worldly involvement or of *dying to the world*" (EDG, 155) which serves as a "prelude" to the actual "conversion" (TPPP, 184) or turn-around.

During this period, the world loses its meaning, life loses its purpose, and the self loses its presumed substance and value. The period is one of disillusionment and alienation from the world. Worldly engagements are suspended, and worldly identity and justification are lost. (EDG, 156)

This purgation is a period of aridity, tedium and sadness. But, while this dullness of spirit can precede and facilitate conversion, it will not be experienced to its full extent until the regression process continues, where such dullness will *underwrite* further anxieties, dread and crises (EDG, 173), as will be seen. In EDG, Washburn appears to hold that conversion can only be propelled by an existential angst (EDG, 156), but this stance is modified in *Transpersonal Psychology*. In *Transpersonal Psychology*, there is not only that existential "loss of interest" in the world and its pursuit; there may also be positive intuitions regarding spiritual "possibilities" (TPPP, 25).⁶¹

Since the existential angst preludes the initial conversion, the spiritual neophyte will experience an "alienation" from world

⁶¹ In *The Ego*, the onset of conversion process is marked by an existential bleakness consisting of feelings of "alienation, meaninglessness, anomie, 'nothingness,' worthlessness, anxiety and despair." (EDG, 156). This is confirmed in *Transpersonal Psychology* when Washburn discusses a condition of "dualistic dissociation" or "midlife crisis." (TPPP, 183) Yet, Washburn qualifies his statements, noting that such a crisis period is not consistently bleak, but allows for glimpses of future opportunities (TPPP, 25).

and even one's *status quo* notions of self (EDG, 158); in *Transpersonal Psychology*, Washburn prefers the word "disillusionment" (TPPP, 187):

The mental ego loses its foothold in the world and is deprived of its established sense of being and worth. (EDG, 159).

This disillusionment brings a sense that one's existence, to this point in time, has been primarily a lived "escape" (TPPP, 189). Supposedly, "the world during the process of alienation undergoes *derealization*." The subject of the conversion sees the world as changing into a "wasteland;" but

these changes in the world...although merely apparent -- i.e. occurring in perception rather than in reality -- seem entirely real to the alienated mental ego (EDG, 160).

Here I would qualify this statement, as Washburn also does later. What seems to transpire is also partly, from a theological point of view as well as psychological, a realization of an element of futility or vanity which in actuality is present in life.⁶² In EDG2, Washburn qualifies himself, saying that the mental ego's responses of "dissociation" and "disorientation" are also responses to the "world's destitution." (EDG2, 177). As Washburn himself points out, the subject begins with "disillusionment" (EDG, 159), detaching him/herself from a false valuation of the world and self. The derealization of the world is not solely a projection from an alienated ego onto an unsuspecting world, but may also be a growing awareness of the inherent limits of creation, improper evaluations

⁶² Analogously, one might consider the awareness of vanity which is a constant in Ecclesiastes.

of the material and the delusory machinations of human society (the real evils to be disvalued). A sense of "flatness" may be experienced, in which all "actions are equal because they have been reduced to mere motions." Similarly, all people are deemed equitable as they are valued as "mere personas." (EDG2, 179).

With this derealization comes the real risk of pathology. Washburn does not hesitate to list "depression, narcissism, existential syndrome, the divided or the schizoid self, and the borderline condition" as possibly occurring during this period of prelude (TPPP, 190; also 191-208). Besides bringing one's neurotic self into this prelude, Washburn contends that "the alienated mental ego is afflicted with much gnashing of teeth and many stings of conscience" (EDG, 165; EDG2, 182). It is, therefore, a period which may be marked, as was said, by existential syndrome. A primary but not exclusive feature of this syndrome is "anxiety": "anxieties of dissociation, death, radical freedom, 'nothingness,' and guilt'" (TPPP, 201). Any of these anxieties may in turn serve to deflate the mental ego through a *divestment* of "disguises and rationalizations" and become the seedbed for "despair." Consequently, it is this despair which may push the ego to the edge (EDG, 166-169). In EDG2, Washburn notes that this despair is "relentless": "It pushes the mental ego ever closer to the brink" (EDG2, 187). In *Transpersonal Psychology*, Washburn gives examples of how this despair may manifest itself in reckless behaviours, such as over-spending, over-eating, theft, and promiscuity (TPPP, 211). I suggest that while this may be true, history has shown

that conversion angst has often led to the commission of harmful penances among Christian mystics, which could be included under his category of "self-mutilating behaviours," although he does not overtly suggest a conscious religious significance to these reckless behaviours on the part of the alienating-derealizing person. Along with or instead of these penances, one may partake in suicidal ideation and parasuicide (TPPP, 213).⁶³ Specifically, Kenneth Wapnick would distinguish between the mystic who separates him/herself from the world and the psychotic who does likewise:

Though the mystic and schizophrenic ostensibly share the same flight from the social world, the mystic's abandonment is merely of his own dependent attachment to it.

On the other hand the schizophrenic's separation is an

escape from the social world within which he [or she] is totally unable to function.⁶⁴

(2) Further Dying to the World in the Passive Night of Sense

The regressive prelude of "dying to the world" and conversion discussed above, which result in alienation, are both seen in EDG as comprising the first stage of regression (EDG, 158-170). But in *Transpersonal Psychology*, there is a regressive state, not so called, which is somewhat comparable to John's passive dark night of the senses, which Washburn terms "the first stage of

⁶³ For similar views on suicidal ideation, but which arise after the onset of meditation see Mark Epstein and Jonathan Lieff, "Psychiatric Complications of Meditation Practice," *Transformations of Consciousness: Conventional and Contemplative Perspectives on Development*, ed. Ken Wilber, Jack Engler and Daniel P. Brown (Boston, MA: Shambhala, 1986), 138.

⁶⁴ Kenneth Wapnick, "Mysticism and Schizophrenia," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 1 (#2, 1969), 65.

transcendence" (TPPP, 217) and which follows after the alienation process, at least among Christian mystics. Washburn skips the penitential exercises of mortification and prayer which assist the alienation process, which together form John's active night of the senses, and proceeds directly to an explication of John's passive night of the senses (TPPP, 221). But remember, while Washburn clearly derives many of his theories from religious traditions, his schema is not specifically religious (EDG2, 158).

Washburn makes it clear from the start that this night -- which is rightly understood as a regression with the potential of leading to further growth -- "is a relentless desert experience of exile, aridity, enervation, disorientation, and unquenchable spiritual thirst" (TPPP, 220).

The passive night of the senses⁶⁵ is the period during which, by the exclusive action of spiritual power, the senses and desires are dulled, interior faculties are deactivated, and in general the ego is disempowered. (TPPP, 222).

The well of consolations in meditative techniques seems to dry up and meditation takes on a sense of aridity (TPPP, 223). One feels unmotivated in the pursuit of the *spiritual* and with this may come a perception of futility (TPPP, 225, 226). Relying on John, Washburn acknowledges in *Transpersonal Psychology* that this period in spiritual development may be fraught with obsessive thoughts and temptations (TPPP, 229), a fact which Washburn in EDG grouped with what he would now call the dark night of the spirit (EDG, 178).

⁶⁵ Not to be understood, as necessarily incorporating or confined to Christian mystical dynamics.

(3-4) Initial Illumination and Regression in the Service of Transcendence

Eventually Washburn's first dark night comes to an end. In EDG Washburn creates a single, although two-fold period of "reconstruction," called "regeneration in spirit" (EDG, 186) which is said to follow the single, although two-fold period of regression. But in *Transpersonal Psychology* this regeneration becomes two distinct periods. The first of these periods is called *illumination* or "initial reopening to the nonegoic core" and located after the dark night of the senses. It consists of enlightenments which are either "ecstatic breakthroughs" or "abysmal" awarenesses. Due to its "double character" the human personality is at risk of "borderline difficulties" or even "psychotic regressions" (TPPP, 25-26). Washburn sees this as an "immature" state, given as it is to "transports, ecstasies, and sudden intuitions." It is not so much the secondary phenomena which render this interval immature, as it is the "narcissistic inflation" which serves to delude "spiritual seekers" into thinking they have reached perfection (TPPP, 240).⁶⁶ Derek Gifford-May and Norman L. Thompson argue that such trances or "transcendence" are the result of a "breakdown of physical

⁶⁶ Epstein maintains that a "narcissistic residue" continues throughout the contemplative path, "affecting goals, aspirations and intimate interpersonal relationships." In the state of "enlightenment" the person moves "beyond the last vestiges of narcissism." Relying upon Teresa, I would have to qualify these comments, insisting that more than a residue of narcissism pervades the contemplative life, and that a narcissistic residue is manifested after transformative union, as minor sins/motives of self-will continue, although they are minimal. Epstein is given to a bit of idealism. Epstein, "Meditative Transformations," 145, 154. *Noradas* VII:4:3. Ken Wilber, pessimistically, proceeds beyond Washburn and maintains that *clinging* to these ecstasies and raptures is "pathological." Ken Wilber, "The Developmental Spectrum and Psychopathology: Part I, Stages and Types of Pathology," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 16 (#1 1984), 111.

boundaries" which permit a sense of "merging" with the object of meditation.⁶⁷

Washburn contends in EDG that there is a second stage to "regression in the service of transcendence" (EDG, 170). In *Transpersonal Psychology*, however, the title "regression in the service of transcendence" is limited only to the interval of regression that follows illumination or "spiritual awakening" (TPPP, 242), and Washburn links it with John's "passive dark night of the spirit" (TPPP, 230-235). In Washburn's account this phase consists of an "encounter with the prepersonal unconscious." Here the mental ego

is drawn into the stormy underworld of the prepersonal unconscious and laid siege to by the liberated power of the Dynamic Ground. (EDG, 170)

Washburn believes that these regressions "draw on the same psychic potentials" available, but repressed or disconnected in the preegoic state (PTF, 4). These regressions represent a re-encounter or "reconnection" of the ego with nonegoic vitality (PTF, 5). As such, this return is to be differentiated from "a pathological regression [in]to infantilism" (LTE, 37).

What I call regression in the service of transcendence is a restorative return to nonegoic potentials which were last active during preegoic stages. In this return, ego functions are not lost and are eventually integrated with reactivated nonegoic potentials. (LTE, 37)

Overall, it can be said that the human personality embarks on a "journey without guarantee of safe passage" (TPPP, 268). For

⁶⁷ Derek Gifford-May and Norman L. Thompson, "'Deep States' of Meditation: Phenomenological Reports of Experience," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 26 (#2, 1994), 125, 130.

example, Washburn is concerned about "black holes" which take place during this period. He teaches that a willful submission to these experiences of "void," where the ego is submitted to the repressed Dynamic Ground, is potentially dangerous (EDG, 171). Such "morbid vacancy" of "denseness, immobility, and blankness of mind" can render the mind "deranged" (EDG, 178).

I am not saying that the nonegoic pole of the psyche is never a source of creative and healing upwellings, because in its 'trans-expression' it is precisely such a source. However, in its status as the prepersonal unconscious, the nonegoic pole should be regarded as presenting definite dangers to the ego, even to the ego that, mature and strong, is 'sea worthy' and ready for regression in the service of transcendence. (EDG2, 189)

During this stage of regression and derepression, Washburn notes that these "voids" are replaced by "fertile voids" in which the conscious being is "deluged with highly charged materials. These materials "disconcert and derange the ego" (EDG, 172). One example of these upsurges are apocalyptic, cataclysmic, vulgar or monstrous dreams (EDG, 172-173; EDG2, 190), a phenomenon which, though Washburn includes it, is not recorded with significance in the Christian mystical tradition. Again, while in the first stage the personality was besieged with "violent anxiety," now the personality is besieged with dread (EDG, 173; EDG2, 191-192) resulting in "bizarre sensations and disconcerting states of mind." The mental ego often becomes "entranced" in these "pervasively strange" mental states (EDG, 174; EDG2, 192).

Washburn maintains that the world takes on a "surreal" (EDG, 175) or "*superreal*" (TPPP, 247; EDG, 175; EDG2, 193) character in the eye and mind of the de-repressing person; everything begins to

seem like a "dream." As such, the person experiences "estrangement" (EDG, 175; EDG2, 193). While the surreal quality usually occurs in the dream-state, it may also occur during the wakened-state such that "there arise in consciousness full-bodied, lifelike images" (EDG, 175): i.e., visions, apparitions.

There are said to be "breakdowns" of the "protective system" of the personality. One example is the surfacing of and then "overrunning" by obsessive "irrational fears." "Infantile terrors" now "spring back to life." As Washburn notes, "these fears can assume sizable proportions, sometimes becoming debilitating fixations or phobias." Because of this, the mental ego fears at times for its own sanity; at the same time this condition may very much appear as a psychosis (EDG, 176; also EDG2, 194) or even be one (EDG, 157).⁶⁸ But whereas in the severely neurotic or psychotic this would end in an incomplete or complete *breakdown* of the personality, in the person-becoming-integrated/person-tending-towards-union this results in a *breakthrough* (EDG, 193).⁶⁹ Briefly put, there are a host of "irrational fears" with which the budding transpersonality must contend: fears of insanity, possession, transparency, conspiracy, among others (EDG2, 194). Washburn carefully avoids the issue of the objectivity of these fears, and concerns himself with their subjective compounding of psychical

⁶⁸ Welwood maintains that the abandonment of an old ego identity makes consciousness confront its most fundamental fears: "The prospect of letting it go faces us with our primal fear of death and the unknown." John Welwood, "Personality Structure: Path of Pathology?," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 18 (#2 1986): 137.

⁶⁹ For a corroborating distinction between of breakdown and breakthrough, and the attendant *quasi-insanity* or fear of insanity see Lowen, *Fear of Life*, 156-161.

upheaval.⁷⁰

Another example of the breakdown of protective structures is the "wild manner" which may occur due to the "overloading" with "energy" from the region of the Dynamic Ground. As such, the "personality tends to operate out of control" (EDG, 177) in "riotous ideation and affect" resulting in "mania and confusion" (EDG, 178) or "even self-destructive behaviour" (TPPP, 249).

At this time Washburn also notes that there may be a noticeable disturbance of mental processes. He calls these disturbances "entrancements" and "empty abstractions" (EDG, 177) of "oppressive numbness" (TPPP, 250). During these periods the mental ego is "unable to manipulate thoughts in a clear and collected way." The mind tends to be "cloudily absorbed or wild and intractable." The mind is also "made a captive witness to a flood of insights," mostly "unwelcome," of "raw impulsions and primitive complexes" (EDG, 177). There are also "forbidden fantasies" which take the shape of "*diabolical*"⁷¹ tortures or temptations" which "assume the character of virtual hallucinations" (EDG, 178; also TPPP, 250-251); that is, they "present themselves as frightening or alluring apparitions" (EDG2, 195).

Also within this stage there is an awakening or "*resurrection*" of the body which might result in a "variety of bizarre physical

⁷⁰ If one believes that there is a God orchestrating both mystical union and personality development, then one ought to leave room, as is historically done, for *both* real and imagined fears. For example, see Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Scarborough, ON: Meridian, 1974), 384-387.

⁷¹ It is not clear in *The Ego* whether Washburn uses this term literally or figuratively, but in *Transpersonal Psychology* Washburn suggests that demons are psychic inventions: they "seem entirely real" (TPPP, 251).

symptoms" (EDG, 178; EDG2, 196). The first form of *resurrection* is that of the rising of the *kundalini*, the core energy of the human person.⁷² The body gradually experiences itself as developing a *polymorphous sensuosity*, (EDG, 179; EDG2, 197; also TPPP, 251-252), the complete owning of such sensuosity being a future goal of derepression (HW, 79). Together with this sensual awakening is an "arousal" of instincts of aggression and sex (EDG, 180; EDG2, 198; also TPPP, 253) tending toward "hedonistic impulsions" (EDG, 181) or "hedonistic-ascetic ambivalences" (EDG2, 199). Bruce Greyson allies a host of symptoms with the awakening of the base energy of the human organism:

intensification of unresolved psychological conflict, fear of death or insanity, overwhelming mood swings, heightened sensitivity to others' moods, confusion, ritualistic or impulsive behaviour, insomnia, uncharacteristic intense sexual drives, gender identity issues, seeing lights or hearing sounds, indecisiveness and 'boundary issues,' grandiosity, and trance-like states of consciousness.⁷³

In so grouping these symptoms together, somewhat indiscriminantly, it is as if Greyson would say that Washburn's *whole* process of freeing the Dynamic Ground from servitude to the ego also involves a conjoint derepression of the *kundalini* (often understood by Eastern contemplatives as energy *coiled* at the base of the spinal column, that is, the sexual *chakra* or position) in various degrees throughout the whole process. Washburn points out that, at this

⁷² Washburn borrows the term, *kundalini*, from Tantrism to explain the Dynamic Ground as situated at the base of spinal cord in latency, available for arousal and awakening at higher positions within the central nervous system. (EDG2, 204).

⁷³ Bruce Greyson, "The Physio-kundalini Syndrome and Mental Illness," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 25 (#1 1993), 47.

time in transpersonality development, the rising of kundalini is quite noticeable.

This purgation carries with it a real risk of "ego death"⁷⁴ or "psychosis" (EDG, 183). Even so, Frohlich argues that the mystical death of ego-control and psychosis are "phenomenologically similar."⁷⁵ The regression under consideration contains a "negative or destructive" element which usually "clears the way for the building of a new order" (EDG, 184; EDG2, 201), but this is not always the case. Washburn writes,

It sometimes happens that the ego is destroyed, that regression in the service of transcendence aborts and degenerates into regression pure and simple. The possibility of such regression is the supreme risk of the Way and the primary reason for the many resemblances between psychosis and mysticism. Both the psychotic and the mystic have been cast upon the sea of the prepersonal unconscious. The difference is that the mystic's ego is seaworthy whereas the psychotic's is not (EDG2, 201). [Rather], the madman capsizes and falls into psychosis. (EDG, 184)

David Lukoff maintains a clear distinction between episodes with "psychotic features" and full-blown psychosis as they arise in the mystical life. He writes,

"In contrast to long-term disorders, temporary psychotic episodes have been observed to result in improvements in the individual's functioning." These "episodes with potential for positive outcomes" have been labelled variously as" problem solving schizophrenias (Boisen), positive disintegration (Dabrowski), creative illness (Ellenberger), spiritual emergencies (Grof and Grof), metanoiac voyages (Laing), [and] visionary states (John

⁷⁴ Used here by Washburn not to mean the disarming of the ego of its selfishness, but rather a real disabling of the ego to its own harm.

⁷⁵ Frohlich, *Intersubjectivity*, 311.

W. Perry).⁷⁶

While Lukoff conceives of these mystical breakthroughs as "temporary psychotic episodes" by reason of their transpiring features, I would interpret them as *psychoticoid* or *psychotic-like* episodes by reason of their outcome. I believe either identification is truthful and appropriate. Again, Herbert Thurston makes a convincing case for the presence of hysteria among some mystics.⁷⁷ This does not demonstrate, for example, that all mystics are hysterical; but it does remind us that some hysterics are mystics. I maintain that both hysterics and mystics share the same threshold -- point of departure, facility, and to some degree, *method* -- when dipping into the unconscious. The mystic, I believe, is often a hysterical-type, a hypersensitive, or at least becomes more hypersensitive. This hypersensitivity facilitates the accessing or opening of the parapsychic faculties. It facilitates also the ease in altering states of consciousness. While a continuous chronic hysteria is debilitating, in many ways being a hysterical-type is, when ascetically disciplined, spiritually advantageous.

(5) Regeneration in Spirit

Following on the heels of the dark night of the spirit, is what Washburn calls "regeneration in spirit" in *Transpersonal*

⁷⁶ David Lukoff, "The Diagnosis of Mystical Experiences with Psychotic Features," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 17 (#2 1985), 156, 157, 158, 159. See also David Lukoff, "Transpersonal Perspectives on Manic Psychosis: Creative, Visionary, and Mystical States," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 20 (#2 1988), 127, 129.

⁷⁷ Herbert Thurston, "Hysteria and Dual Personality," *The Month* 168 (October 1936), 336-346.

Psychology. It is a period marked by, "visions," "rapture, transport, and ecstasy," yet not without its "regressive relapses" (TPPP, 27; also 257, 263-265). It is during this second reconstruction that the Dynamic Ground is ascendant; the Ground is now being accepted as "the ego's own higher life" (EDG, 205). With this ascendancy the Ground no longer is said to do "violence" to the ego (EDG, 189).

This period of regeneration might be said to be "purgative" in the sense that the remnants of the personality's egocentrism are "overcome" through this regeneration (EDG, 192; see also EDG2, 209) by a "ravishment" (TPPP, 261) or "dilation" of sorts. This dilation is experienced, at first, as painful, since the "egoic sphere" is still very much constricted. As the dilations are repeated, and the egoic sphere becomes more widened, the painfulness gradually disappears (EDG, 193; EDG2, 210). As one example of dilation, Washburn refers to Teresa of Avila's mystic phenomenon of the "wound of love,"⁷⁸ or as Washburn likes to call it, "ego passion," as characteristic of this stage in spiritual transformation. During this phenomenon the ego is "forcibly opened and penetrated" and the ego experiences both pain and pleasure (EDG, 194; EDG2, 211; also TPPP, 261).

What are some of the characteristics of regeneration after the dark night of the spirit? Washburn states that the regenerating personality having undergone an *inflation* of its instincts (EDG,

⁷⁸ See *Moradas* VI:2:2 & 4. For Teresa, these wounds stir the desires for complete union with God/transformation to fever pitch. They might be construed as the preface of the unitive state.

197), will progress to a *calming*, "positive" presence in the "psychic economy" (EDG, 197, 198; EDG2, 214). It is here that the ego may be said to actually "return to polymorphously sensual life" (TPPP, 266). Washburn insists that during regeneration, the instincts are "no longer superstimulated" as they were during derepression (EDG, 197), but are in fact "enriching" (TPPP, 267). For example, the sexual instinct "begins at times to grace interpersonal encounters with a harmless erotic appeal" (EDG, 198). Furthermore, Washburn holds that the sexual instinct leads to "animal magnetism" and accounts for historical occurrences of spiritual power over animals (EDG, 199). In EDG2, Washburn no longer treats this *magnetic* phenomenon so literally. Rather, Washburn now allows for a symbolic appreciation of the saintly *mythology* which surrounds relations between saint and beast: that this *mythology* is so much allegory for the "taming of instincts" found within us (EDG2, 215).

Along with this supra-sexuality and *animal magnetism* comes Washburn's sense of "sincerity and authority" which is said to exude from the regenerating/regenerated person, much like the perceived *authority* which Jesus is said to have had (Mt 7:28-29). This sincerity and authority are often manifested in tangible ways: they bear "significant results" (EDG, 205). Washburn goes on to define these results as "prophecy, healing, clairvoyance, and inspired leadership capabilities" (EDG, 206; see also EDG2, 221). Even so,

supernormal powers are by no means a necessary or perhaps even a usual part of the spiritual process (EDG2, 221).

During regeneration, "spiritual excess" occurs (TPPP, 263). It is said that "virtual hallucinations"⁷⁹ and "vacant trances" (EDG, 202; EDG2, 218), that is, "unwelcome intuitions" and "inert vacancy" continue, but now as "positive" rather than so much "negative" occurrence as found in periods of regression (EDG2, 217). The subject is prone to "mental hyperactivity" (EDG2, 218), but this soon changes into "contemplative absorptions" (EDG, 202). "Genuine," illuminating "visions" of "higher meanings and possibilities" also transpire here (EDG, 203; EDG2, 219). Washburn insists that such visions "decreasingly depict demons and infernal depths and increasingly depict angels and celestial heights" (EDG, 203-204; EDG2, 210; also TPPP, 265-266). Added to this are episodes of "mental manias" (EDG, 204), that is "cognitive manias" (EDG2, 219) which Washburn defines as "states of explosive discharge that...are seriously intoxicated and disorganized" (EDG, 204; EDG2, 219). There may also occur what Washburn calls "tearful rejoicings," in which the ego cries out of "gratitude" and a deep sense of "peace" (TPPP, 260).

(6) Integration

When regeneration is complete, the human personality is then said to be integrated. But what characterizes integration in the

⁷⁹ The semblance of hallucinations: the phenomena "resemble hallucinations" (EDG, 203). Washburn does not propose here the longstanding *Catholic* notion of objective non-material *presences* impinging upon the psyche; rather he actively supports a psychological explanation: "the autosymbolic process sometimes dramatizes derepressing materials by giving them lifelike form" (EDG2, 218). Notice Washburn's choice of wording, "sometimes," which, though not advocating parapsychological encounters, leaves room for a supernatural explanation for those who would insist upon them as possible.

theories of Michael Washburn? Must one have reached a state of psychological *perfection*? I requested a clarification from Washburn to this effect: "How integrated must one be to receive the label *integrated* according to your theories?"⁸⁰ Washburn quickly responded, and in such a way as if to suggest a philosophical *relativity* in employing the designation, *integrated*.

I believe...there will be parts of a person which are not included in the integration that is achieved.⁸¹

There appears to be concurrence of Washburn with James W. Fowler, whose parallel "Stage 6" of faith-development, that of "universalizing faith," is a stage where

greatness of commitment and vision often coexist with great blind spots and limitations. ...To be Stage 6 does not mean to be perfect, whether perfection be understood in a moral, psychological or a leadership sense.⁸²

It appears that, having generally passed through the process towards integration, the personality has discovered more of its potentiality, has become most of itself, although this cannot be quantified in any practical fashion. Washburn, in his *corpus*, provides us with numerous characteristics by which we may ascertain whether, in fact, a significant degree of integration has occurred to warrant the designation, *integration*.

According to Washburn, "integration" represents the phase in human development where the personality might be considered self-

⁸⁰ Donald Blais, OCDS, E-mail to Michael Washburn (October 30, 1996).

⁸¹ Michael Washburn, E-mail to Donald Blais, OCDS (November 5, 1996).

⁸² James W. Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (New York, NY: Harper, 1981), 202.

realized, and where human persons are able to move most fully out of their potency (TPPP, 293; EDG, 215; EDG2, 231). In a qualified sense, Washburn is able to say

Integration is the end of *becoming* human and the beginning of *being* a complete human being. (EDG2, 231; EDG, 215)

And again,

It is only with the achievement of integration that the psyche become a completely harmonious duality, a *coincidentia oppositorum*. (EDG2, 231)

That is, in integration the Dynamic Ground and the ego are able to function in general concordance. It is here that the "ego-self," which has died and risen, is now subjected and united to the Dynamic Ground or "spirit" pole of the human personality. As such the resuscitated and remade ego may be said to be "yoked or wedded to divine power" (HW, 70; also TPPP, 315) or, in the Christian context, wedded to Christ (TPT, 103).⁸³ Still, *integration* represents an ideal never absolutely achieved.

Thoughts and feelings become integrated so that Washburn is able to say that integrated persons are persons of "conscience." Such persons are able to act without any real sort of hesitation upon "insights" arising from their truest intuitions (HW, 79). "Thought becomes spirited and feelings become insightful" (EDG, 217). Coexisting with and complementing this conscience is a "transparency" in which integrated persons act from their more true natures, but not without being able to tailor their outside selves

⁸³ These comments are to be understood more in the context of psychological archetypes, rather than in a strictly theological context. The "divine power" or "Christ" represents the numinous self, a self even more vital than the ethical self, and far superior to the egocentric self.

for the sake of prudence or in tolerance of the feelings of others. In this they differ from the egoic who are compelled to hide their true selves out of lack of confidence, the need to please, the desire to deceive and for other inordinate reasons (TPPP, 295). The integrated go about as "spontaneous, authentic, dynamic, and spiritual" (EDG, 224). In a psychological sense, we might say that they are no longer servants of the flesh, but of the spirit (cf Jn 6:63). They now live by a "law of freedom" (cf Jm 2:12). Conformism no longer determines the nature of the ego's responses, but an inner drive. In a psychological sense the words of Jesus may be applied here: "I have conquered the world" (Jn 16:33). For they are no longer "scripted" into a predefined "role" from society (EDG, 224). Integrated persons are by and large self-disciplining and "other-attuned" (EDG, 225; EDG2, 242).

They are people whose acquired structures of personality, no longer in any sense a fabrication, have become the vehicle for authentic instinctual and spiritual life.

...Ego identity, long in the process of formation, is eventually exposed as a false mask and regressively submitted to derepressing nonegoic life. This regressive negation of ego identity, however, is not an annihilation. To be sure, many structures of the mental-egoic personality are purged without remainder, namely, all that are opaque or resistant to the free movement of spirit. (EDG2, 242)

Mature, "objectless contemplations" (EDG2, 247; EDG, 219) are characteristic of this phase. These contemplations consist, in part, of "dynamic" or "lucid" absorption (EDG2, 234; EDG, 218). But unlike previous absorptions where the ego sometimes becomes temporarily embedded in archetypal Mother, here the ego transcends

itself and is immersed in something greater than ego.⁸⁴

The ego, although...unselfconsciously involved in experience, is nonetheless still able to exercise ego functions. (EDG2, 246)

Integrated mysticism, in Washburn's system, is "the highest form of infused and absorbed experience" (EDG, 231). This *enlightened* state is a "gift of grace" (EDG2, 247; EDG, 232) or "infused" (TPPP, 303) since it is "beyond anything the ego can attain or induce on its own" (EDG2, 247; also EDG, 232). Mystics experience the heavenly through divine election when and where the divine -- "the godhead behind god" (TPPP, 317) -- "bares itself to the ego" (EDG, 232-233). While the egoist is blinded by the empirical, the mystic passes beyond the temporal to experience the divine in all persons: panentheism.⁸⁵ This is where "mature contemplation" or "enstasy" -- peaceful, all-consuming contemplation -- transpires. (TPPP, 302-303)

On the whole Washburn's theories employ mystical experience in

⁸⁴ According to Washburn, when the Dynamic Ground is beginning to be derepressed, the ego may encounter the Ground as an archetypal *Great Mother*. Following Washburn, I am insisting that meditation may result in blank states of merger with one's Ground, a sort of Freudian *return to mother's breast*, a "return to preoedipal object relations" (EDG2, 199).

⁸⁵ There are understood to be two principal forms of panentheism: 1) The Christian sense. That is, Christian mystics profess a Supreme Being behind, *other than* and yet within all persons. It is this Being which these mystics enter into a personal relationship as the truth *at* the root of their true selves. 2) A more Eastern or New Age sense. Here there is divine energy behind and within all persons, but not truly *other than* all persons. It is this energy which mystics engage *as* the root of their true selves. In an E-mail letter with Washburn, he states that he does not necessarily view these positions as opposed to each other. While he holds to the second, he does not rule out the first as a possibility. According to Washburn, there is a core power within the psyche (the Dynamic Ground) which in its position of ascendancy is the "higher self as spirit," and as such may be called *divine*. But Washburn makes allowance for the existence of a divine Being who would be a "source altogether beyond the psyche;" this Being would also be a spirit to the psyche by stirring and establishing the Ground and informing the psyche. Michael Washburn, E-mail to Donald Blais, OCDS (November 20, 1994). In "Linearity," Washburn nuances his position: "I have repeatedly stressed that we cannot know for sure whether the source of spiritual energy -- which I call the Dynamic Ground -- is an ontological ground or cosmic being of some sort or only an underlying basis of the *psyche*." Washburn, "Linearity," 37.

two ways: (1) in an allegorical sense, to explain intra-psychic conditions which are applicable to many integrating persons; (2) in a literal sense, as mysticism represents an "idealized" or "exaggerated" (EDG2, 174) case study of psychological integration.

D. Addendum

"Two Patterns of Transcendence," an article by Eugene Thomas and associates, appeared in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* in the Summer of 1993. The purpose of this supposed study was to show that Washburn's theories -- predominantly those related to his notions of a regressive state -- were inadequate to the task. It is maintained by Thomas et al. that 50% of subjects tested under Thomas et al.'s loose guidance and classified as transpersonalities had not passed through a pronounced regressive state. This study, I might add, is seriously flawed. (1) None of the four authors of the article has credentials in the field of mysticism or transpersonal thought. Rather, all four persons are qualified in family therapies. (2) The study relies upon hearsay to "identify" their subjects as "spiritually advanced" by a "local informant." (3) The four *too easily* found candidates to test, as if transpersonal persons were not as rare as Washburn (backed by Maslow, James, Underhill and Poulain) would suggest. (4) Half of the subjects were drawn from conventional Protestantism, not truly open to unconventional religious/mystical experience. (5) All subjects were classified in Wilberite categories, not according to Washburn's categories, to see if Washburn's categories properly

tested out. (6) Washburn is criticized for not allowing exceptions to his theories, yet Washburn never disavows exceptions. In *Ego*, 1st ed., Washburn argues against Wilber, insisting upon the possibility of incomplete psychic progressions (alienations and repressions of psychic potentialities) and the occasional *arresting* of some psychic interplay.⁸⁶ In "Linearity" (dated Fall 1996), Washburn again criticizes Wilber, claiming that Wilber does not permit "skipping levels [of development]" nor allows for the "need to return to lower levels [of development]" within his linear hierarchical paradigm.⁸⁷ (7) Washburn is criticized as binding psychological progression to biological age, yet Washburn's paradigm as shown, is not necessarily biologically linked. (8) Washburn is held responsible for not anticipating various life contingencies. I believe it unfair to insist that a paradigm -- any paradigm for that matter -- anticipates every likelihood. (9) The study underestimates the dynamics involved in the remaking of a personality, as if one would only need glide from period to period to integration.⁸⁸ How ever little reworking God wished to do upon the personality of Thérèse of Lisieux, even she had a dramatic several month period in which there was obvious breaking and reconstruction of psychic structures. As von Franz writes,

Life, in its essence, means crucifixion and to the

⁸⁶ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 29.

⁸⁷ Washburn, "Linearity," 36.

⁸⁸ L. Eugene Thomas, Stephen J. Brewer, Patricia A. Kraus and Barbara L. Rosen, "Two Patterns of Transcendence: An Empirical Examination of Wilber's and Washburn's Theories," *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 33 (Summer 1993), 66-81.

rational ego it seems to be death...⁸⁹

It is psychologically and theologically foolish to ill-appreciate the gravity of ego-death (that is, death of the ego's dominance) and reduce such a death to, say, minor mood swings which have no special significance. Again, von Franz has this to say,

Eruptions in the psyche are necessary for personal transformation.⁹⁰

3. Evaluation

It remains for me to evaluate the material outlined above, which relates to the paradigms of human transformation as set forth by Teresa of Avila and Michael Washburn. The first consideration will involve interfacing Washburn's system of transpersonal development with Teresa of Avila's paradigm. The function of this interface is to help us appreciate the psychological dynamics of Teresa of Avila's mystical transformation. Fundamentally, the approach taken will be that of *psycho-theology*: using psychology to unearth the psychological dynamics involved in experiential theology. Following this I will reflect strictly upon some of the theological implications regarding the psychological dynamics of this mystical transformation: (1) What are the uses of the word, *mad* (and synonyms) by Teresa, and what is their theological significance as descriptors of the mystic or the mystical encounter? (2) What constitutes spiritual perfection? Is it more

⁸⁹ von Franz, *Puer Aeternus*, VII, 12.

⁹⁰ von Franz, *Puer Aeternus*, IV, 1-2.

than intellectual assent, faith assent, and perfection in virtue? Could it also not involve a psychological reconfiguration and a psychological conformity to God? (3) Is it too much to suggest that Teresa held that the temporarily/permanently *mad* mystic reflects a *Mad* God?

A. Washburn Interfaced With Teresa

Appropriately, we should examine Teresa's mysticism utilizing the transpersonal theories of Michael Washburn. The examination process will raise two questions: What notions of Washburn allow us to enter into the psychological dynamics of the transforming mystic? Where (if at all) do Teresa and Washburn depart significantly, or cancel out each other? Both of these latter questions will be considered together.

Teresa begins the spiritual/mystical path with a realization of a void or vanity to social institutions and valuations. Washburn would call this initial psychological detachment, from an uncritical immersion in society and an indiscriminate acceptance of one's identity project, as disillusionment. Disillusionment eventually leads to alienation and a degree of disengagement. Alienation itself will not involve a psychotic withdrawal from the marketplace, as in an inability to cope within social constructs. Rather, it will involve an intentional withdrawal so as to contend with growing self and societal dissatisfaction. That is, withdrawal represents wanting *more* not *less* of an existence. Disillusionment involves a psychological disruption in the ego's

relationship with its identity project and ego-ideal. Such a disruption may be dramatic (as in the instance of the Magdalene and St. Paul, according to Teresa); or it may be gradual, with a consequent assortment of disruptive behaviours (as Teresa asserts is the usual case among pre-mystic types). As such, disillusionment or even alienation might be considered pathologic-like, analogous to pre- or full-blown psychosis, especially if it increases in degree and frequency. In reading Washburn there is an overriding sense of a vital momentum to Washburn's disillusionment once it sets in (though this is not openly stated). By contrast, I note a difference in Teresa's movement through the early mansions, which tends to plod in pace (although Teresa is adamant that God, Who is in control, can do anything). Finally, prayer in Teresa's Mansion 1, or meditation commencing during Washburn's disillusionment, is nothing more than conventional dissociative prayer, where one petitions or praises, and in which God is intellectualized or sensed as removed. As such, in this mansion, the Christian is very much the *practical atheist*, intellectually and morally, professing belief in God and Christ yet living as if They were not. There is a psychological split between the spiritual and the day-to-day.

In Mansion 2 Teresa discusses demonic involvement in the process of mystical transformation. For Washburn, the demonic is figurative or metaphorical for negative internal crises/elements. Yet, Teresa was sophisticated enough to make distinctions between demons and melancholy due to humoral imbalances (what we would now

call chemical imbalances or genetic tendencies). Yet, this does not mean that either understanding of the demonic must negate the other. According to Teresa, the demonic spirits feed upon the darker/hidden side of the personality,⁹¹ that is, one's human vulnerability. Here, as dark side or *shadow*, Washburn would place repressions of neutral psychic materials deemed by the ego too overwhelming with which to deal, of unresolved negative feelings, incomplete psychic structures and so forth within the Dynamic Ground. These begin to surface through alienation, in a condition which seems to psychologically oppress or possess the ego. It is not too far removed for the theologian to appreciate the darkness of the personality, such as the collective unconscious, surfacing so as to assail the status-quo personality, in a manner not always under the Holy Spirit's lead. Nor is it inconceivable for a transpersonal psychologist to hypothesize a *spiritual* condition in which the mystic, becoming derepressed, could be more psychologically unguarded, thus more susceptible to malevolent or neutral presences (however one would then go on to define them), aggravating the process of derepression, compounding the suffering involved, seeking to hinder proper derepression and later integration, as well as thwarting moral and faith development. Even so, as Washburn points out, disillusionment is followed by alienation in which the neurotic self comes to the fore through an existential syndrome, and risks pathology for the schizoid or borderline personality. (Teresa warns in this mansion of

⁹¹ *Noradas* 1:2:12.

melancholy, a catch term for various mental disturbances, involving a troubled mind: obsessive thoughts and images.) Neurotic symptoms given by Washburn, and consonant with Teresa, might include depression, anxiety, fears, despair, and even suicidal ideation. From a psychological-theological point of view one might say both figuratively and literally with Teresa, "All of hell will come together" to assuage the pre-mystic.⁹²

Mansion 2 is also the state in which the pre-mystic might *tinker* with meditation. Washburn inserts meditation before the onset of alienation, Teresa after her alienating period. Why? It seems that Washburn treats meditation as serving an interior awakening and dissatisfaction with ego-ideal and marketplace preoccupation.⁹³ Teresa, on the other hand, uses mental prayer, generally, as a means not only of developing a relationship with God but of transforming the person in virtue, of solidifying life in virtue. For Washburn meditation is an initiator; for Teresa it is an intensifier.

Teresa deems Mansion 3 as the stage where conversion begins to concretize. Yet, this is a stage marked by circumspection: the near-mystic has little or no sense of the heroic: to transcend the self, to love excessively, to be consumed with desire for God, etc. Furthermore, spiritual dryness and melancholy may be found here as well. For Washburn, disillusionment leads to alienation, then to a period of ennui. Motivation becomes problematic. The Desert

⁹² *Noradas* II:1:5.

⁹³ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 153-170.

Fathers would speak of the spiritual condition as one of *accidie*. Yet, Washburn also adds obsessive thoughts and temptations, which correspond more to Teresa's Mansion 2.

Mansion 4 marks for Teresa the point where the contemplative is initiated into a more consciously direct relationship with God, with such a relationship manifesting some secondary mystical phenomena. God begins to encounter the soul in a more bivalent fashion: consolations and desolations: tears and quiet on the one hand, and interior trials, psychological disturbances, physical illness on the other. There is ambiguity even in the prayer of quiet: Teresa warns that such a blessed event can cause premature death, if the mystic and his/her director/superior is not cautious. Washburn himself notes that when the Ground of the personality begins to make its presence known to the ego there is a sense of "bivalency" on the part of the Ground.

The bivalence of the power of the Ground is the source of perhaps the most basic problem of the ego's existence. ...The problem of bivalence resurfaces with the onset of regression in the service of transcendence and continues to afflict the ego throughout this stage, and the stage of regeneration in spirit as well, because during these transitional periods the ego comes once again under the direct influence of the Ground and undergoes a death-rebirth transformation at the hands of the power of the Ground.⁹⁴

Washburn's corresponding stage to Teresa's Mansion 4 is that of illumination which acts as the "initial reopening to the nonegoic core," or as the precipitator of regression in the service of transcendence. This period is experienced as one with a "double

⁹⁴ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 123.

character" of light and darkness.⁹⁵ The personality is subject, according to Washburn, to ecstasies and delightful intuitions, but then is brought down by hellish awarenesses. Such bivalency, Washburn contends, can result in borderline psychosis or other pathological regressions. Again, Teresa cautions about melancholy. If indeed God is opening up the Ground through mystical encounter, such a bivalent experience would seem not only indicative of one's relationship with God, of a God Who constructs and deconstructs the personality and the mystical relationship, but of one's relationship with the hidden self, a deeper self which is both creative and destructive. As Washburn points out, the Ground has the power to wound or destroy -- "absorb or dissolve" -- the ego if the Ground is derepressed improperly.⁹⁶ It should be noted that Teresa speaks of raptures along with union as forms of ecstatic experience -- of being consummated in ecstatic joy and a sense of being beside one's self -- in *Vida* 20 sandwiched between her discussion of *quiet*, but in *Moradas* rapture is discussed as the property of Mansion 6. I might add that the experience of bivalency on the part of God/Christ may be, in part, a projection upon God/Christ of the psychological gyrations which the Dynamic Ground is imposing upon the structure of the self and particularly aimed at the ego. But as a theologian, I would have to insist that we avoid the tendency to psychological reductionism. If as Christians we believe in the immediacy of God as grace

⁹⁵ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 25-26.

⁹⁶ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 123.

working in the personality, then we need only to harken to the story of Job in order to appreciate the lesson of death and rebirth involved in direct encounter with Divinity. God begins to work (it seems according to Teresa) a death and rebirth in the consciousness of the budding mystic and (if we consider Washburn) presides over the rise of the Dynamic Ground in the personality of the mystic. Psychic death and rebirth is prerequisite in this psychological reorganization. (Still, let us not make too much of the notion of spiritual death until Mansion 6 where interior trials are tantamount to *death*, and where the name *death* is merited. Comparatively, Mansion 4 is a disablement, whereas part of Mansion 6 is a martyrdom through affliction.)

Mansion 5 is the mansion of temporary union or spiritual sleep, and coming from this sleep one can experience a sense of *holy madness* or *inebriation*. It seems that the first substantial encounters with the Divine and the numinous can momentarily disengage or numb or stupefy the ego and even leave the personality, for a time, in a state of raving. This again is consonant with Washburn's "initial reopening to the nonegoic core" and would be seen as breakthroughs rather than pathological breakdowns, judging such phenomena by their outcomes. Is unhealthy narcissism beginning to diminish? For extended periods, is the contemplative beginning to be authentically concerned more for other/Other than for self? The contemplative, according to Teresa, should be pained over the sins of others: for offenses against God and spiritual damage to self. Specifically, Teresa believes

cloistered persons should find relief for this spiritual pain in further penances.

Mansion 6, for Teresa, is a vague mansion, if we consider previous writings of Teresa as well. As noted above, it is not all that clear whether suffering begins the mansion, ends the mansion or is interspersed throughout the mansion. But it is a mansion of extreme bivalency, whether or not there is more than one life-to-death or death-to-rebirth modulation. This mansion will find parallels in both Washburn's regression in the service of ego and regeneration.

This is a mansion of extreme action of deconstruction and reconstruction of the consciousness of the mystic through both *exaggerated* desolations and consolations. As for desolations it is not necessary to repeat them by kind. It is enough to say that the mystic senses the remnants of his/her status-quo self as being put to death, especially a sense of ego-death. Ego-death is to be understood as death to the ego as point of reference and as locus of control in the personality structure. God, through the Dynamic Ground, is asserting the Ground's claims upon the personality. Washburn speaks of psychic upheavals as debilitating the ego. Whether these upheavals are the product of an objectively Divine, demonic or human agency, or whether these upheavals are projections of interior conflicts upon exterior beings, or both (and I am inclined to believe that the situation is both objective and projective based upon Teresa's autobiographical accounts), is not the point. The point is that these upheavals are real and that the

dismantling and reassembling of consciousness is real, and both are real in a faith or religious setting. These desolations do not represent the breakdown of the personality and pure regression. Yes, there is psychic splintering, but these regressions differ both in meaning and result from psychosis. These regressions, besides their spiritual significance to the mystic, will have psychological significance: for they will conclude in a metamorphosis of self, of a new and stronger and more authentic self, according to Washburn.

According to Teresa, besides the psychotic-like/psychoticoid episodes precipitated by desolations,⁹⁷ there are also consolations which have the appearance of expansive *manias*. Here, Teresa also writes of raptures and impulses which bring the mystic to states of *madness*, among other manifestations. Attention should be paid to the fact that, as the mystic claims a closer proximity to transforming union, the risk of clinical insanity from desolations and the frequency of *holy mania during consolations* increases. It seems that these desolations and consolations indicate a dynamism on the part of God/Christ which, when the mystic encounters it more purely, has a maddening (for lack of better words) effect upon the human consciousness. Are these encounters too much for the unguarded personality to process as is? As far as the consolations are concerned, Washburn maintains they have a dilating effect upon the self: the self is expanded and enlivened. These consolations

⁹⁷ These desolations are indications (*nuestras*) that spiritual betrothal will be consummated. *Noradas* VI:1:1.

expand the sphere of the authentic self and utilize force in achieving these psychological ends. Even so, narcissism is not inflated, as the ego is being slowly unseated.

Mansion 7 is a state marked by *excess*. The judgment of the transformed mystic is for the most part no longer the judgment of the pre-mystic. It is monomaniac and a-rational, and functioning more by the spirit than by the letter.⁹⁸ Teresa suggests that the consummation of the earthly spiritual life is one of *amar* ("love") over *tanto seso* ("much [common] sense").⁹⁹ Regressions to previous stages are usually negligible. This state finds sympathy in Washburn's integration, where the Dynamic Ground and the ego are reconciled in a relationship where the Ground has ascendancy. Such persons, according to Washburn, are more "transparent" or authentic, no longer living as compromised or repressed personalities, fearful to be otherwise. The motivations of non-egoic personalities, and consequently their behaviours, are often mysterious to the egoist. Such non-egoic persons are self-disciplined as well as spontaneous, however paradoxical. While psychologically integrated persons desire solitude for peaceful contemplation, they also desire to be immersed in social settings for the benefit of others. (They seek a balance of the demands and needs of the spirit and the body, the demands and needs of self and others.) Teresa would concur as to this last observation regarding the integrated, as applying to the mystically transformed as well.

⁹⁸ See Rm 7:6 as paradigmatic of this condition.

⁹⁹ *Meditaciones* 3:8.

B. Perfection Into Madness

Oh wearisome condition of Humanity! / Borne under one Law, to another bound: / Vainly begot, and yet forbidden vanity...¹⁰⁰

The life and the struggles of Jesus, as found in the Gospels, have functioned as paradigmatic for Christian mystics. These mystics have often understood the texts in ways that suggest Jesus of Nazareth, the God-Human, the Christ, underwent some sort of psychological disequilibrium Himself in His Humanity.¹⁰¹ Attention has been given to the accounts of His temptation in the desert (Mt 4:1-11; Lk 4:1-13), His dark period in the Garden of Olives resulting in the sweating of blood (Lk 22:44), and His sense of affliction and spiritual abandonment upon the Cross (Mk 15:34). Beyond these negative disequilibriums, there is the positive phenomenon of the transfiguration of Jesus (Mt 17:2), understood literally. If we, in the postmodern period, acknowledge any historicity to these Gospel phenomena, it would be presumptuous to insist that these psychological disequilibriums represented a progression in psychological cohesion, for we would not know whether they were progressive or incidental. Still, as I have pointed out, they have served paradigmatically for the mystic, who is open to union with God, and who intently travels the path of dying to self.

But, the issue comes down to this: Can we as contemporary

¹⁰⁰ Fulke Greville, "Chorvs Sacerdotvm," *Mustapha, Poems and Dramas of Fulke Greville*, vol II, ed. Geoffrey Bullough (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1939), 136.

¹⁰¹ Teresa and John of the Cross regularly refer to interior sufferings of Jesus, too often to deserve citation. This empathy with Jesus reaches a peak in the mystical literature of, for example, Alphonsus Liguori and Margaret Mary Alacoque.

Christians shake loose our tendency to minimize the notion of assuming one's cross (Mt 16:24), of baptism into the death of Christ (Rm 6:3) so as to arise a new creation? A departure from religious minimalism would require that we view baptism as a potent symbolic death, even as it is not a magical death. Baptismal symbolism is the language for a spiritual and psychological death which is initiated through the symbol and, for the contemplative, consummated in mystical marriage. I maintain that part of the core Christian message is that the Christian must pass from Old Adam to New Adam (1 Cor 15:45-49), *flesh* to *spirit* (Rm 8:5-11), old creation to new creation (2 Cor 5:17), truly from creation A to creation B. Specifically, the mystic personality structure is like an odd lump of clay being *reworked* into a piece of art at the pleasure of the Divine Potter (cf. Sir 33:13; Rm 9:21); or is like a chunk of ore refined and molded as precious metal (cf. Zec 13:9; Is 1:25); or, as a microcosm, is created beauty arising from chaos (cf Gn 1). As John Saward comments,

Such a change [through baptism], a change wrought by sanctifying grace is *real* change. But the end is not yet; we are still *in via*.¹⁰²

And again Saward insists,

Christian perfection, then, is nothing less than the transformation of [the hu]man by the Holy Spirit.¹⁰³

As we have demonstrated, according to Teresa and Washburn, the mystic begins as condition A₁, is psychologically and morally

¹⁰² John Saward, *Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 213.

¹⁰³ Saward, *Perfect Fools*, 213.

dismantled and remade into condition A₂ and then condition B. Teresa does not merely talk about spirituality as making an inner journey throughout the soul's castle, but of building the castle anew brick by brick.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, she insists that love must be continuously metamorphosed.¹⁰⁵ But more importantly for Teresa, the worm (spiritual initiate) must become the butterfly (the contemplative) must become *Christ* (the transformed).¹⁰⁶ In some sense the esotericist's efforts to change iron by alchemy into gold; or the change in meaning of the liturgical water, which begins as a "leprous" substance, and then is "blessed" as "purified body" prior to being mixed with wine;¹⁰⁷ but moreover the real sacramental transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ symbolize the *transignificance* -- the change in definition or design -- which must necessarily transpire in the personality structure of the Christian mystic.

Perfection, for the mystic, must consist in something far more than intellectual assent, which even demons can muster (cf. Mk 5:7). Secondly, it must involve much more than a faith assent, a profession with the lips which even hypocrites can produce (cf. Mt 23:25). Thirdly, it demands more than acquired virtues, which are habits or qualities accidental to the essence of the person. With

¹⁰⁴ *Noradas* I:1:5; VII:4:8.

¹⁰⁵ *Noradas* VII:4:9.

¹⁰⁶ *Noradas* V:2:8; VII:2:5; VII:3:1.

¹⁰⁷ Carl Jung, "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass," *Psychology and Western Religion*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 105.

regards to the last of these, Karl Rahner raises the issue of *surface piety*, conformity of behaviour and acquired moral uprightness, as falling short of the Catholic/Orthodox sense of *metanoia*:

The well-known picture of the old ascetic who has become "hardened" in virtue, can properly be brought forward as an illustration here: the picture of a person who engages in countless moral ways of acting by force of habit, without seeming to realize these moral values in the truly spiritual and personal or genuine and original way which was originally intended in such behaviours.¹⁰⁸

Fourthly, if we speak of perfection as the infusion or activity of grace within the soul, Rahner would rejoin by raising the issue of children saints as Christians somehow falling short of *perfection*:

Are they, in spite of their really heroic virtue, still beginners in the proper sense of the doctrine of the steps of the spiritual life, so that "perfection" in the sense of this properly understood doctrine of the steps of the spiritual life cannot be identified with heroic virtue...?¹⁰⁹

Fifthly, a modification in relationship or a modification in divine mode of presence does not appear sufficient for *perfection* even if Teresa herself refers to spiritual marriage in terms suggesting a modification of divine presence.¹¹⁰ For in regards to grace, relationship and presence, presumably even Satan could claim these prior to his fall which the Word is said to have personally witnessed (cf. Lk 10:18). On this point Teresa acknowledges the

¹⁰⁸ Karl Rahner, "Reflections on the Problem of the Gradual Ascent to Christian Perfection," *Theological Investigations*, vol III: *Theology of the Spiritual Life*, trans. Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger (Baltimore, MD: Helicon Press, 1967), 17.

¹⁰⁹ Rahner, "Reflections on the Problem," 14.

¹¹⁰ *Moradas* VII:1:9.

possibility of the righteous falling.¹¹¹ Rather, it seems that perfection involves -- beyond faith, confession, illumination, virtue and infused grace -- a change of consciousness (albeit not constant) on the part of the mystic, requiring a loss into Another's awareness.

This consciousness would have as prerequisite a conformity of wills. For example, Teresa insists that union involves a conformity to God's expressed desires and commands.¹¹² Expounding on Teresa's theology of spiritual marriage, Jess Byron Hollenback explains that through the prayer states of betrothal and marriage, the mystic

instinctively conforms his actions and his intentions exclusively to God's will just as though God's will had been his own.¹¹³

More importantly, this conformity implies a *union of wills* as, according to Teresa, marriage is a state of joining of wills.¹¹⁴ Rightly so, after Teresa, we may value mystical marriage as exceeding infused or acquired conformity to divine intentions. On the existence of this joining of wills I would have to agree with Kurt Reinhardt, but I depart from his position when Reinhart goes on to argue that marriage is *largely* a matter of union of wills.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ *Meditaciones* 2:13.

¹¹² *Cuentas* 65 (25): 3 (2).

¹¹³ Jess Byron Hollenback, *Mysticism: Experience, Response, and Empowerment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 552.

¹¹⁴ *Moradas* VII:2:4; also *Cuentas* 65 (25): 5 (3).

¹¹⁵ Kurt F. Reinhardt, "Fundamental Notions of Mysticism," *New Scholasticism* 5 (April 1931): 118.

The joining of wills is also the recent interpretation of Bernard McGinn for *unio mystica*, according to his understanding of Teresa's doctrine.¹¹⁶ It is not clear whether such a sentiment is also shared by Dennis Tamburello. Tamburello understands "*unus spiritus* [one in spirit] in the sense of a union of wills," but does this mean a joining of wills or simply "a good *relationship* with God" or "living according to God's commandments"?¹¹⁷

Evelyn Underhill struggled with the notion of mystical union. She was reticent about using effusive language, but resisted confining union to terms expressing the joining of wills. Underhill finds herself modulating between speaking of the state of union as "a close personal union of will and of heart," and describing the union as a divine penetration and an exchange between parties:

a transfusion of self by His [God's] Self: an entrance upon a new order of life, so high and so harmonious with Reality that it can only be called divine.¹¹⁸

True, "humans still remained human and God still remained God"¹¹⁹ -- as regards to essence. But I maintain that, after Teresa (as will be seen) and Underhill, spiritual marriage is a union of wills *and significantly more*.

¹¹⁶ Bernard McGinn, "Love, Knowledge and *Unio Mystica* in the Western Christian Tradition," *Mystical Union in Judaism, Christianity and Islam: An Ecumenical Dialogue* (New York, NY: Continuum, 1996), 82. In *The Growth of Mysticism*, McGinn maintains that the "tradition of Christian mysticism taught that union does not surpass perfect loving union of wills..." *Growth of Mysticism*, 213.

¹¹⁷ Dennis Tamburello, OFM, *Ordinary Mysticism* (New York, NY: Paulist, 1996), 114, 119.

¹¹⁸ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Scarborough, ON: Meridian, 1974), 428, 420.

¹¹⁹ Hollenback, *Mysticism*, 582.

Mystical union surpasses the two-fold marriage as proposed by Mary Cutri, OCD in "Spousal Intimacy." She writes,

The oneness with God in spiritual marriage results not in the absorption of the human personality but in the emergence of the *true self* which has been given fullness of life. A marriage has taken place *within the person* by way of human integration [masculine/feminine; conscious/unconscious] and also *with God* by way of intimate and mutual self-donation.¹²⁰

Spiritual marriage, I contend, involves yet encompasses more than psychological reorganization and "mutual self-donation," the first of which I have been quite concerned with in the dissertation. Yes, there is a structural reorganization but for the purpose of accommodation to God. Teresa writes of God's work on the soul as having *ensanchado*/"stretched" it,¹²¹ as if to suit it to divine purposes. Frohlich, commenting on Mansion 6, writes,

They are still involved in the arduous process of the radical restructuring of spirit and psyche that preceded permanent union. This restructuring is extraordinarily painful...¹²²

However, in mystical marriage there is also the profound owning of the personality by God/Christ as Master. Consistently throughout *Moradas* Teresa refers to God/Christ as her Majesty Who goes about claiming what They believe to be theirs: *Está el Rey en su palacio*.¹²³ Yet, I will go so far as to say that Christ's role in the perfection of the mystic is *beyond* His being the Majesty of

¹²⁰ Mary Cutri, OCD, "Spousal Intimacy," *Spiritual Life* 34 (Spring 1988), 21.

¹²¹ *Moradas* VII:3:12.

¹²² Frohlich, *Intersubjectivity*, 220.

¹²³ "The King is in His palace." *Moradas* VII:2:11.

the inner castle. *In union Christ stands as integrifier of the personality structure, the active agent of the individual mystic's psychological and moral integrity.*¹²⁴ Christ's role in the personality structure is that of the active unifying agent, the *integrifier*, replacing the ego's role of providing a phantasmal integrity. Christ causes the human personality to emanate its true self, its own integrity. Christ behaves as a factor of dominance implanted within the personality structure achieving God's desired integrity for the individual mystic. The *I*, the mystic's ego, always remains a constant in the personality, though unseated from its role of dominance. Furthermore, Christ acts as uniting force, aligning the personality for mutual exchange and participation in the Godhead, though analogous and limited in comparison to the hypostasis of Divine Word with Human within Jesus Christ. Christ is present as an element of the personality structure, otherwise the fulfilment and glorification of the fallen personality may not be achieved. It is for this reason, I believe, Teresa is able to recount Christ saying to her,

*Come por Mí y duerme por Mí, y todo lo que hicieres sea por Mí, como si no lo vivieses tú ya, sino Yo, que esto es lo que decía San Pablo.*¹²⁵

All of these factors, from confession to accommodation are necessary to spiritual marriage, as implied by Teresa, but they are not enough. Christ as moderator of the personality structure is

¹²⁴ Christ is agent in an analogous way to leaven in bread.

¹²⁵ "Eat for Me and sleep for Me, and [let] everything that you do be for Me, as if you no longer live but I [instead], for this is of what St. Paul was speaking." *Cuentas* 42 (51).

necessary for perfection else the mystic would be unable to say after St. Paul, "Not I but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). The mystic would not be able to find solace in the prayer for union which Christ prayed, He employing a parallelism in His speech suggesting a kind of equivocation, if this integral componency was missing: *Ego in eis, et tu in me.*¹²⁶ Even Teresa, in *Moradas* VII:2:5, paraphrases 1 Cor 6:17 and its message of being made one spirit with Christ,¹²⁷ as well as Phil 1:21 ("For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.") as support for her understanding of the nature of union.

The personality structure has to be re-fashioned, the Trinity through Christ must assume ascendancy in this structure as enspiriting the person's dynamic life, and furthermore, must be the agent which brings about the fullness of new identity within the person, in order that perfection may be achieved. This condition of Christ correcting the mystic's personality structure is, I maintain, nothing short of a *hypostasis, with qualification*. Even Catherine of Siena, with whose theology Teresa had some familiarity,¹²⁸ writes:

For by such [continual] prayer the soul is united with God...and through desire and affection and the union of love He [God] makes of her another Himself.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ "I in them, and You [the Father] in Me" (Jn 17:23).

¹²⁷ *El que se arrima y allega a Dios, hácese un espíritu con El.* That is, "He that draws close and comes near to God, is made one spirit with Him."

¹²⁸ *Vida* 22:7.

¹²⁹ St. Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Noffke, OP (New York, NY: Paulist, 1980), 25.

(Because of this hypostasis, God and the soul can frequently function in harmony of will.) Teresa is not shy about referring to Jesus as Lord having His special heavenly dwelling place in the soul and wishing to consummate spiritual marriage there;¹³⁰ or the soul after marriage as a little stream flowing into the sea of God.¹³¹ John of the Cross, himself, refers to the marriage of mystic with God as the union of a candle's light with the high noon sun.¹³² And when discussing the marriage she has with her Majesty Jesus, Teresa writes of *la unión tan soberana de espíritu con espíritu*: "a union so royal of spirit with spirit."¹³³ With all the psychological upheavals and reconfigurations along the mystical path, these Teresian statements have to be more than *pious hyperbole*. If Teresa is being figurative or effusive in describing union, the upheavals and reconfigurations along the mystical path would be just so many superfluous anomalies, a secondary inordinate mysticism. I will assert that these Teresian metaphors clearly suggest a *hypostasis* with Christ by the Father in the Spirit. Hence, Teresa senses within herself a continuous Trinitarian indwelling.¹³⁴

This hypostasis differs from an ecstatic possession state in which the personality is submerged by a foreign presence. With

¹³⁰ *Moradas* VII:1:3.

¹³¹ *Moradas* VII:2:4.

¹³² John of the Cross, *Cántico* B 22:3.

¹³³ *Moradas* VII:4:10.

¹³⁴ *Cuentas* 42 (51).

mystical hypostasis, the mystic is not thwarted in his/her exploration of human potentiality, but is glorified to some extent in sharing more directly in the power of the Resurrection, as well as making a free offering of self to Divine Other in love. Such a hypostasis appears to be the essence of Teresa's spiritual marriage, which Teresa believes finds solidarity with Paul's words:

Qui autem adhaeret Domino unus spiritus est (1 Cor 6:17).¹³⁵

Christ is, in mystical hypostasis, much like the Dynamic Ground within the personality itself, the "unifying principle of individuation."¹³⁶ McGinn, for example, errs on the side of caution, understandably, when discussing *unio mystica* in the Western Christian tradition in general, and Teresa in particular. In an effort to avoid the effusiveness of those mystics who write of an apparent "*unitas indistinctionis*" (a unity of indistinguished natures), McGinn minimizes the "*unitas spiritus*" (a union of spirits) of Sts. Bernard of Clairvaux and Teresa as if such a union was *spiritualized* as in a *quasi-union*, not completely genuine or essential. But a union or *confrontation*, not mingling, of essences,¹³⁷ of spirit with Spirit -- and without mediation¹³⁸ -- while inferring communion, does not necessarily suggest

¹³⁵ That is, "Now, whoever is fitted to the Lord, is one spirit with Him."

¹³⁶ "Hypostasis," *The Harper Collins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, ed. Richard P. McBrien (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1995), 647.

¹³⁷ "...la Trinidad por presencia y por potencia y esencia en nuestras almas." "...the Trinity by presence and by power and essence in our souls." *Cuentas* 41 (49): 2 (1).

¹³⁸ *Cuentas* 66 (65): 10 (9).

confusion or absorption. For example, when Teresa discusses a little stream flowing into the sea, she does not depart from her *I-Thou* posture of discussing the mystic and God/Christ. And when the Mother of God appears to Teresa, she is quite distinctly Mary, all the while being enformed and permeated by Divine Light.¹³⁹

If ego-centrism can be equated with sin or concupiscence, then ego-centrism must be abolished within the personality, and this, according to Teresa and Washburn, would require radical means. As Catherine of Siena succinctly put it,

No matter what your state in life, it is essential to kill this selfish love in yourself.¹⁴⁰

I am insisting that, following Teresa's lead (and relying upon Washburn), Christ navigates the Ground of personality as it ascends to a place of dominance within the personality structure. (Teresa is adamant when she writes of forgetfulness of self as the characteristic of Mansion 7.)¹⁴¹ Christ then would be the *unifying agent* or *integrifier* (not the integrity,¹⁴² which remains that of the mystic) of a more wholesome personality structure. Frohlich agrees to this extent, that during mystical transformation the "self-representation, which previously mediated" between conscious and unconscious personality "undergoes radical change or even

¹³⁹ *Vida* 33:15.

¹⁴⁰ Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, 111.

¹⁴¹ *Moradas* VII:3:2.

¹⁴² That which makes me *me* or *self*, to be distinguished from the ego, *I*, as one's integrity is greater than the ego.

disintegration."¹⁴³ Scripture speaks itself of a state in heaven of *knowing as we are known* (1 Cor 13:12) -- as if we will no longer use the ego as a point of reference in consciousness and moral decisions as we relate to reality. In heaven we will -- at least, Teresa anticipates this¹⁴⁴ -- see through the eyes of God: of knowing oneself in the process of knowing, rather than retreating from the knowing process back to the ego for personal reference. Teresa's Calced Carmelite contemporary, Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, confirms this *knowing as known* in her own mystical experiences. de' Pazzi writes of being lost in the Eucharist which she has just received and now adores.

I saw only that I was in God, but I did not see myself -
- only God.¹⁴⁵

It is not that de' Pazzi lost consciousness, or that her consciousness was confused with God's, for how else would she be able to know of or recall her participation in the encounter? Rather, de' Pazzi's account demonstrates a loss of self-consciousness, of ego-centrism, of preoccupation with ego. This radical detachment from self-preoccupation will be possible because of the mystical notion to which the Eastern Church refers as *identification* (not to be understood in an absolute sense). As the Melkite theologian Joseph Raya explains, love can become so perfect

¹⁴³ Frohlich, *Intersubjectivity*, note 47, 311.

¹⁴⁴ Teresa writes, at one point, that in the state of union there is *no memoria de amor en sí*: "no memory of love of self." *Cuentas* 65 (25):3 (2).

¹⁴⁵ Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, Cited in *The Soul Afire: Revelations of the Mystics*, ed. H.A. Reinhold (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1973), 349.

as to mysteriously bring about a state of "identification" whereby "two persons become as one."

In fact, they are one. There is no greater love than the gift of oneself. By the complete surrender of themselves to each other the two are identified with each other. One's own personality melts and is fused into the other's personality. This mystery of identification is the apex and the fullness of life; it is love.¹⁴⁶

In respect to mystical union, Teresa herself writes in a manner which suggests identification. For example, Teresa records a locution in which she claims Christ declared everything of His, specifically His sufferings and merits, as being Teresa's:

*Lo que Yo tengo es tuyo.*¹⁴⁷

Again, I refer to the passage, recalling 1 Cor 10:31, in which Christ claims Teresa's eating and sleeping as His.¹⁴⁸ John of the Cross is also adamant about the mystic and God/Christ valuing the other as self that he confesses the mystic *como divina, endiosada*.¹⁴⁹

While this *identification* is not so philosophically defined in the East, it is, I believe, an aspect of what I am trying to explain by mystical hypostasis. In the hypostatic union known as Jesus Christ, the Divine Word united with a complete human being. The Person of Jesus Christ is divine, not human. There are two wills perfectly willing as one. I maintain that in mystical

¹⁴⁶ Archbishop Joseph M. Raya, *The Face of God: Essays in Byzantine Spirituality* (Denville, NJ: Dimension, 1976), 35.

¹⁴⁷ "Whatever I have is yours." *Cuentas* 50 (46)

¹⁴⁸ *Cuentas* 42 (51).

¹⁴⁹ "Is as if divine, made divine-like." John of the Cross, *Cántico* 8 27:7.

hypostasis, God through Christ defines the human personality structure, while the human person begins to participate more fully in the life of the Trinity. There is the will of God and the will of the mystic frequently willing as one. The mystic may experience him/herself as divine-like, *as empathic to the divine*, in as much as it pleases Trinity to freely share of Their copiousness. The notion of participation would explain why Teresa uses the verb, *comunicar*,¹⁵⁰ to both explain the dynamic interchange among the Persons of the Trinity,¹⁵¹ as well as the Trinity's sharing of Selves with the mystic.¹⁵² This Teresian understanding is consistent with John of the Cross who, in *Spiritual Canticles*, maintains that what is Christ's is the mystic's, to the extent that the mystic spirates the Holy Spirit with the Incarnate Word in the union of the Godhead.

*Ella aspire en Dios la misma aspiración de amor que el Padre aspira en el Hijo y el Hijo en el Padre, que es el mismo Espíritu Santo...*¹⁵³

Mystical hypostasis, I believe, consists of integral involvement of Christ in the inner workings of the mystic, but does not entail a reconstitution of our fundamental human nature. As such, the two hypostases -- that of Christ and that of the Christ with the mystic -- are not identical but analogous. *Et Verbum*

¹⁵⁰ To communicate.

¹⁵¹ *Cuentas* 60 (29):3.

¹⁵² *Moradas* VII:1:6.

¹⁵³ "She [the soul] breathes in God the selfsame Breath of love which the Father breathes in the Son, and the Son in the Father, which is the same Holy Spirit..." John of the Cross, *Cántico* 8 39:3.

caro factum est (Jn 1:14)¹⁵⁴ is one the the principal axioms of Teresa's spirituality. For Teresa, God the Word became thoroughly Human;¹⁵⁵ Jesus had two complete natures, Divine and Human.¹⁵⁶ The incarnation united the Human with the Divine in Jesus.¹⁵⁷ Yet in some sense, the union of natures meant the *sacrifice* of a human person in Jesus Christ. Jesus speaks to Teresa as a Divine Person, with the voice of the Divine.¹⁵⁸ This notion of a sacrifice of the human person is consistent with the Chalcedonian Creed, according to Leonardo Boff. It is also consistent with Boff's contemporary Christology. Boff argues that there is an "absence of a human person in Jesus (in the classical metaphysical sense)." But, this "does not imply a lack of anything in the humanity of Jesus." Person should be understood as the means by which human beings "sustain themselves and ontologically affirm their beings." The "ontological sustaining force" of Jesus is God the Word. The Person of Word maintains two essences and two consciousnesses, according to Boff.¹⁵⁹ On the contrary, union for the mystic means the retention of our human person. Yet, Christ as integrifier within the personality structure is not to be viewed as foreign to

¹⁵⁴ "And the Word became Flesh."

¹⁵⁵ *Meditaciones* 1:10.

¹⁵⁶ e.g., *Meditaciones* 1:9; *Moradas* 6:7:9, 14.

¹⁵⁷ *!Que ya el hombre es Dios!*: "Now that [hu]man is God!" "Villancico A La Natividad," stanza 1.

¹⁵⁸ *Cuentas* 25 (31).

¹⁵⁹ Leonardo Boff, *Jesus Christ Liberator: A Critical Christology For Our Time*, trans. Patrick Hughes (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1981), 191-192.

the human condition, but in some sense natural since, according to John Meyendorff,

[The hu]man is not an autonomous being. His [or her] true humanity is realized only when he [or she] lives 'in God' and possesses divine qualities.¹⁶⁰

Mystical hypostasis -- of Christ solidifying human potentialities and imparting more directly the life of the Trinity within the personality -- is an *extension* of the sustaining presence of Trinity within the person. As an extension, such a hypostasis functions as a *native component* of human beingness. Meyendorff on Irenaeus argues that the human nature "is composed of three elements: body, soul, and Holy Spirit."¹⁶¹ These hypostases also run inverted. While the Incarnation of the Word prepared for Crucifixion and Resurrection, in mystical marriage there were states of crucifixion (regression) and resurrection (reintegration) which more or less led to an incarnation of Jesus within the mystic.¹⁶²

This incarnation of Christ in the mystic involves a new vision, a new focus of attention, new eyes and ears. The inner senses of the mystic are unbound, cleansed and broadened in

¹⁶⁰ John Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology: Historical Trends and Doctrinal Themes* (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 1979), 139.

¹⁶¹ Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, 138. Walter Principe nuances his understanding of the Church Fathers differently than Meyendorff. Principe maintains that for those Fathers who argued a "triadic view" of the human person, which consists of body, soul and spirit, not Holy Spirit, "growth in Christian virtue or holiness would be by the presence of the Holy Spirit to the spirit." Walter Principe, *Introduction to Patristic and Medieval Theology*, 2nd ed. (Toronto, ON: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1987), 51.

¹⁶² Teresa speaks of spiritual marriage as *de que nazcan siempre obras, obras*: "Of that nativity always of (good) works, (good) works." *Moradas* VII:4:6.

perspective.¹⁶³ Not by right or volition but by permission the mystic's interior senses may participate intimately and directly in the *insensorium*, the inner sense-life, of Jesus¹⁶⁴ -- feelings, judgments, perceptions, understandings, thoughts, attitudes -- via a kind of *christopathy*. As Juan de los Angeles (1536 - 1609), familiar with Teresa's prose, confesses,

[Lovers]¹⁶⁵ do not live in themselves but in what is loved.¹⁶⁵

John of the Cross himself argues that the transformed mystic shares in the secrets of the Godhead through his/her marriage to Christ. Christ, with ease and regularity, opens up the mystery of the Trinitarian life for a participation by the mystic.

*En este alto estado del matrimonio espiritual con gran facilidad y frecuencia descubre el Esposo al alma sus maravillosos secretos como su fiel consorte...*¹⁶⁶

At one point John, effusively, writes of the bridal soul as being made divine in quality, and God in identity, by reason of the intimacy and intensity of her participation in the Trinity. For John this participation in the divine is real, the sense that one is divine-like is real, the effect on the soul is real, and the Christ-consciousness that occurs at intervals in the soul is real.

¹⁶³ *Moradas* VII:1:5.

¹⁶⁴ See, for example, *Moradas* VII:3:8 in which Teresa speaks of the Lord being present with the soul in such a way that the soul shares in His desires.

¹⁶⁵ Juan de los Angeles, *Spiritual Conflict*, Cited in *The Spirit of the Spanish Mystics: An Anthology of Spanish Religious Prose from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Kathleen Pond (London: Burns & Oates, 1958), 115.

¹⁶⁶ "In this exalted estate of spiritual marriage, with great facility and frequency, the Spouse unveils/reveals [to] the soul marvellous secrets as to a loyal consort." John of the Cross, *Cántico* 8 23:intro.

*El alma heca divina, y Dios por participación cuanto se puede en esta vida.*¹⁶⁷

Yet, for all that has been said, this does not mean that such mystical communications are perfectly free of distorting factors. Farges teaches that one of the graces of mystical marriage is that

the communication of *secrets* and *intellectual possessions* is still more striking, and it is a fact fully confirmed in the lives of the saints. The Spouse seems to feel a need to pour out His most intimate secrets into the heart of the bride whom His tenderness identifies with Himself.¹⁶⁸

Ahlgren points out that Fuente, a contemporary critic of Teresa, charged Teresa with "attributing full divinization" to her notions of transforming marital union. But Ahlgren argues,

Teresa's point was that union with God gave the soul access to a kind of knowledge that it ordinarily would not have. The soul could not control its access to that knowledge, it might not even understand and appreciate it fully, and its way of knowing was not transformed into God's way.¹⁶⁹

Teresa speaks of mystical marriage as a stream flowing into a sea. The implications of the metaphor are important. For the marriage is not impervious to damage. Yet, Teresa herself writes of spiritual marriage in terms of permanency.¹⁷⁰ Paradigmatically, the Lord God is said to be faithful to His covenant (Ps 104/105:8); and Christ remains married to His Church (Eph 5:32). Still, this does not mean that the river (the personality) cannot dam its flow

¹⁶⁷ "The soul is made divine and God by participation as much as it is able in this life." John of the Cross, *Cántico B* 22:3.

¹⁶⁸ Farges, *Mystical Phenomena*, 187.

¹⁶⁹ Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila*, 130.

¹⁷⁰ *Moradas* VII:2:3.

temporarily or permanently, or the mouth leading from the ocean (God) to the stream cannot impede exchange. Teresa implies that there are at least occasional temporary impediments such that the mystic, even in Mansion 7, falters in resolve. Moreover, Teresa cautions her audience, as she admits the possibility (however rare) of complete spiritual demise.¹⁷¹ In this position I depart in my interpretation of Teresa from Farges, who believes it

reasonable to think that the graces, so extraordinary and superabundant, with which the divine Spouse fills the soul of His bride, are to her a sure guarantee of inviolable fidelity.¹⁷²

Commenting on Teresa, Tamburello cautions that

this does not mean that it [the soul] sees no possibility of falling. Indeed, the soul now becomes even more vigilant and fearful of any offense against God.¹⁷³

Returning to an earlier thought, what does the abolition of ego-centrism mean, psychologically and theologically? If a relative modicum of ego-centrism is considered by the psychological community as the norm, as normalcy or sanity,¹⁷⁴ and the regressive breakdown of a fragile ego-base is deemed demonstrably pathological, what are we to think of surmounting the need for ego-centrism? Can the ego be structurally secure enough to be then off-centred in the personality, while its centrality-function is

¹⁷¹ *Moradas* VII:4:7.

¹⁷² Farges, *Mystical Phenomena*, 185.

¹⁷³ Tamburello, *Ordinary Mysticism*, 108.

¹⁷⁴ "All religious and all existential philosophies have agreed that such egoic experience is...a state...of socially accepted madness." R.D. Laing, "Transcendental Experience," *The Highest State of Consciousness*, ed. John White (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 108-109.

replaced by Ground orchestrated directly by Christ? According to R.D. Laing, a genuine transcendence of the ego is psychologically possible, even admirable:

True sanity entails in one way or another the dissolution of the normal ego, that false self competently adjusted to our alienated social reality; ...the eventual re-establishment of a new kind of ego-functioning, the ego now being¹⁷⁵ the servant of the divine, no longer its betrayer.

What, then, is the culminating state of mysticism on earth, specifically Teresian mysticism? Is it rather an a-rationality or an a-sanity, however intermittent? Juan de los Angeles argues that love found in spiritual marriage is "painted as blind." Why?

Because although it [love] is founded on reason at the beginning [of the spiritual life], as it increases [in perfection] it is not ruled by reason.¹⁷⁶

Is it for this reason that Teresa's mystical foretastes through rapture and the like are called *holy madness* by Teresa? These questions will be addressed in more depth in the section entitled, "Classifications of *Holy Madness*." I have demonstrated that according to the Teresian understanding those mystics who become closer to Christ in union and approximation or accommodation experience both positive and negative periods of *religious madness* with greater frequency. Is this because the divine nature, as other mystics have suggested, is *mad* or because of the frailty of the human form or both? It is as if in the transformed mystic immorality (psychologically linked with insanity, according to the

¹⁷⁵ Laing, "Transcendental Experience," 113.

¹⁷⁶ Juan de los Angeles, *Spiritual Conflict, The Spirit of the Spanish Mystics*, 115.

period) and sanity are supplanted by *divine madness*.

As to the nature of this *divine madness*, I will examine the notion in depth after considering the erotic and violent behaviours of God/Christ involved in the mystical phenomenon of rapture. *Divine madness* will be discussed in the section entitled, "The Accommodation of God in Mystical Transformation: Is God Really Mad?" It is enough, here, to acknowledge that when Teresa writes of a *holy madness* coming upon the mystic, or of spiritual trauma when encountering God/Christ, such words are telling both of the weakness of the human frame as they are about the Source of this disequilibrium. When God/Christ is seen by Teresa as *inebriating*,¹⁷⁷ as if the Trinity were some sort of *Divine Ambrosia*, two things are being said: (1) the human person has properties which make it susceptible to an intoxicated response to Divine engagement; and (2) God has intoxicating *properties*, but not necessarily that Trinity is intoxicated. I mentioned above, for example, that when Catherine of Siena speaks of divine inebriation, she refers to the soul becoming drunk upon the drunkenness of God.¹⁷⁸ When Moses teases God to reveal His face, God replies that the revelation of His face as is would destroy His creation (Ex 33:18-23). This passage speaks not only of the lowliness of creation, but the exaltedness of God. I will say that since the rise of the Age of Enlightenment from the bowels of Scholasticism, there has been an on-going assumption that God, made in the image

¹⁷⁷ *Meditaciones* 4:4.

¹⁷⁸ Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue*, 71, 55.

of the idealized rational human, is supremely linearly rational. But God is not in the image of our fictions: He is a God Who creates trees asymmetrically. He is a God Who defies our logic and good taste. For Teresa, God has an excessive love (*el excesivo amor*) which is displayed in His acts of pardon towards the wretched.¹⁷⁹ According to the Gospel of Matthew, God can reward His servants equally for unequal strife endured, rather than employing a *logically* scaled compensation (cf. Mt 20:1-16). Indeed, what is demonstrated in this passage is an a-logic which permits a largess to some and justice to others. This Matthean notion also finds its way in Teresa's experience: Teresa is convinced that God possesses the freedom to do as He pleases and the eagerness to bestow gifts.¹⁸⁰ Metaphorically, we might say that God has passed beyond logic, and if sanity is linked with reason, also sanity, no longer needing their confines. It is this a-logic, insanity (or better yet, a-sanity) and their excessiveness which the mystic encounters when he/she engages God in mystical prayer. According to Teresa and others, the mystic participates in this divine excess by reason of transforming union and its hypostasis. From revelation we know that God's ways and thoughts are ultimately beyond human categorization (Is 55:8). Yet, the question remains, "Is this a-logic, insanity and excessiveness *God*, or projection by the mystic, or a third option yet to be explored?"

¹⁷⁹ *Cuentas* 14 (13):3 (2).

¹⁸⁰ e.g. *Moradas* VI:11:1.

Chapter Three: *Madness in Practice: The Erotic Violence of Teresa's Los Arrobamientos De Contento*

1. Religious and Cultural Postures

Before we actually examine the violent and erotic nature of rapture, it behooves us to sidetrack a moment and consider the cultural milieu in which Teresa found herself. This will allow for three things. First. It will help us to appreciate the choice of language Teresa appropriates from the greater Iberian culture, Christian, Islamic and Sephardic, in order to explain the transcendental nature of her raptures and her notions about God. Second. Establishing such postures will allow us to grasp, in some fashion, how the culture contributes to the shaping of Teresa's psyche. Regarding Teresa's involvement, such shaping partially anticipates and directs the course these raptures take. Since we are so removed from Teresa and her culture, it would be idle speculation to try to establish with certainty how much of any given aspect of culture conditions Teresa's raptures, and how much of any given aspect Teresa co-opts to explain God's side of the raptures. It will be enough for me to show a correlation. Third. We should not forget that God must speak to us in a language we understand, else there would be no communication. God has to communicate and encounter Teresa in a way which she could derive some appreciation of God. The transhistorical when intersecting the historical must do so in a historical manner. More of the significance of these three factors -- appropriation, conditioning, divine intersection -- will be borne out in the section entitled *Accommodation*.

A. Misogyny

Sixteenth century Spain sanctioned a misogynist attitude toward women. It seems to be evident, for example, in the notation Teresa made of sons being prized more highly than daughters.¹ The condescending attitude regarding women was to be found in various aspects of society. Was not the female sex something which represented disorder?² Juan Luis Vives praised Catherine of Aragon in terms that suggested strong or assertive women were aberrations of nature, although such "manly" aberrations were more welcomed than the typical *inferior* sort of women.³ Tongue-in-cheek, Teresa wrote that courage was not characteristic of women: ...*el gran valor...no cierto de mujeres*.⁴ We know that this remark was tongue-in-cheek, as Teresa believed that her nuns' strength could be *espanten a los hombres*: "frightening to men." It was Teresa's desire that her nuns be, in virtue, tough, "virile males": *varones fuertes*.⁵ Ahlgren, as support for her historical and theological analyses of Teresa and her critics, carefully gathers and examines misogynist statements aimed at Teresa. For example, Ahlgren notes

¹ *Fundaciones* 20:2-3.

² Mary Elizabeth Perry, "Deviant Insiders: Legalized Prostitutes and a Consciousness of Women in Early Modern Seville," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 27 (January 1985): 139.

³ Valerie Wayne, "Zenobia in Medieval and Renaissance Literature," *Ambiguous Realities: Women in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carole Levin and Jeanie Watson (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 52. For similar positions of the period see Constance Jordan, "Boccaccio's In-Famous Women: Gender and Civic Virtue in the *De mulieribus claris*," *Ambiguous Realities: Women in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carole Levin and Jeanie Watson (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 27, 45.

⁴ "great valor [is] not true of women." *Fundaciones* 1:6.

⁵ *Camino* 7:8.

that Alonso de la Fuente, a contemporary, condemned Teresa posthumously. He "denied women's capacity to have legitimate mystical experiences." Another critic, Juan de Orellana, maintains, in Ahlgren's words, that "it was the height of audacity" for Teresa to have taught men through her writings. Juan de Lorenzana is said to have criticized Teresa's theological writings because of Teresa's *womanly* reason and her lack of formal education. (The latter cause for condemnation is a *catch-22*, in that Teresa, because she was a woman, was prevented from having a formal education.)⁶

B. The Perception of Women as Sex-Starved

Women, more so than men, were believed by popular estimation to be sexually obsessed. It was being caught in the wiles of womanhood which caused men to lose virtue and self-control. Hence in the Renaissance medical community, women were viewed as the "*primary* victims of morbid love." Peter of Spain argued that women *contracted this more frequently than men*.⁷ As far back as the thirteenth century, Arnaldo de Villanova argued that melancholia was often due to an interruption of menstrual flow.⁸ In the sixteenth century, Luys Lovera of Avila, the royal physician to

⁶ Gillian T.W. Ahlgren, *Teresa of Avila and the Politics of Sanctity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 119, 120, 121.

⁷ Mary Frances Wack, *Lovesickness in the Middle Ages: The Viaticum and Its Commentaries* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 123, 122.

⁸ John G. Howells, MD, *World History of Psychiatry* (New York, NY: Brunner, 1975), 104.

Charles V, repeats this same etiology.⁹ The melancholic humor could be diagnosed as afflicting the womb, thus inducing "nymphomania" in women, according to Alfonso Ponce De Santa Cruz, physician to Philip II.¹⁰ Teresa, it seems, followed the standard medical opinion of the day when she noted that women in particular are quite susceptible to melancholia;¹¹ although Teresa is circumspect as to not mention its erotomaniac aspects on which the physician Cristobel de Vega, for example, had focused.¹² In short, Spanish women were seen to be sexually preoccupied and consumed with lust, with irrationality as the explanation given for sexuality being out of women's control. Men were women's hapless victims, though men were deemed superior to women in every other regard. As Caroline Walker Bynum writes on the medieval spiritual legacy to the Renaissance,

[Medieval male hagiographers] were far more likely to attribute sexual or bodily temptation to female nature than to male and to see women struggling unsuccessfully to overcome the flesh.¹³

C. Prostitution

Catholic country though it was, prostitution was made legal in

⁹ Howells, *World History*, 109.

¹⁰ Howells, *World History*, 109.

¹¹ *Fundaciones* 7:10.

¹² Franz G. Alexander, MD and Sheldon T. Selesnick, MD, *The History of Psychiatry* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1966), 117.

¹³ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 29.

Spain as far back as the thirteenth century in Seville. Francisco Farfan in 1585 wrote that prostitutes served as the disposal for the moral waste of the city. These unfortunate women "were labelled," according to Mary Elizabeth Perry, "essential to the moral order of the city;" so to speak, necessary sacrificial *latrines*.¹⁴ Spain, as well as other cities throughout Western Europe, had its *requisite* sexual-servicing bathhouses and Church financed brothels.¹⁵ (Even St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, it is said, was financed not only through the sale of indulgences, but by taxation on prostitution.) Upper clergy openly kept mistresses or frequented prostitutes; the royal courts of Europe readily engaged in a variety of sexual perversions.¹⁶

D. General Promiscuity

Promiscuity was rampant at times in Spain. Perry maintains that parishes in Seville and Madrid recorded illegitimacy as high as one quarter of all births.¹⁷ The plague of syphilis was flourishing at this time in Italy, France, Germany and Spain.¹⁸ Love-magic was of major concern.¹⁹ Even Teresa refers to an

¹⁴ Perry, "Deviant Insiders," 140, 143.

¹⁵ Reay Tannahill, *Sex in History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1980), 278-282.

¹⁶ Richard Lewinsohn, MD, *A History of Sexual Customs*, trans. Alexander Mayce (Greenwich, CN: Premier Book, 1958), 157-158, 173-176.

¹⁷ Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 58.

¹⁸ Tannahill, *Sex in History*, 278-282.

¹⁹ Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 8, 30-31, 56-57.

instance of this occurring between a cleric-confessor and his mistress.²⁰ Teresa throughout her monastery-founding career insists upon enclosure.²¹ Was this because of a deep-seated misogyny within Teresa, or necessity? Apparently grilles were imperative in many instances, seeing that men often dedicated themselves to "young and attractive nuns" in a chivalrous manner, and these nuns would be their "objects of devotion."²² Grilles, thus, served to prevent these "friendships" (*amistads*)²³ from developing. On a curious note, Perry records the following tidbit that "between 1559 and 1648, the Inquisition prosecuted 174 people [in and around Seville] for 'simple fornication'." The plea of these men consisted in the argument that their actions were not mortally sinful, since they had given their co-fornicators some money thereby reducing the sin to a morally venial status!²⁴ Here the numbers are not of concern, averaging two or three a year caught and then prosecuted by the Inquisition about Seville. What is of importance is the moral mindset justifying fornication and the objectification of women.

E. Love-sickness and Madness

Developed notions of love-sickness came into Islamic culture

²⁰ *Vida* 5:5.

²¹ e.g. *Vida* 7:3.

²² Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 80.

²³ *Vida* 5:4.

²⁴ Perry, "Deviant Insiders," 120-121.

by way of the translation of "Greek thinkers" such as "Plato, Ptolemy [and] Galen." Michael Dols, in *Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, writes that among medieval Muslim societies (North African and European) "profane love, when it was excessive, was commonly believed to be a form of madness." The subject of this *mad* love-sickness was dealt with Islam by the storyteller and the poet, the philosopher, the theologian, the physician and the astrologer. Love-sickness -- '*ishq* -- was a term resisted by Islamic theologians regarding the relations of God with the believer "because of its carnal connotations," but was heartfully employed by the Sufi mystic. In literature the term *masāri'* was used in reference to love-sickness, a term whose root suggests "throwing down to the ground," "to fall down in an epileptic fit," "to go mad," or "to be killed in battle." Ibn al-Jawzī (d.1200 AD) maintained, according to Dols, that "the cure of genuine love-madness was impossible." The love-sick might be "driven to fornication, incest, murder, suicide, or madness." Popular Islamic literature focused upon three love-sick pairs:²⁵ Majnūn and Laylā, Zulaykhā (Potiphar's wife) and Joseph, and Prince Kamar as-Zamān and Princess Budūr of *The Thousand and One Nights*. The latter pair justified the notion that "the [lustful/sexual] desire of women is fiercer than the desire of men."²⁶

Love-sickness for God was a real phenomenon among the Sufi.

²⁵ One or both of the characters were so stricken.

²⁶ Michael W. Dols, *Majnūn: The Madman in Medieval Islamic Society*, ed. Diana E. Immisch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 315, 314, 316, 313, 318, 319, 318, 320, 340, 345, 346.

The woman Sufi saint, Rabia, wrote about her mystical love-sickness:

If I die of longing and He [God]
is still not satiated,
How great my pain...²⁷

Medieval Sufism had adopted and expanded the medical and popular understandings of love-sickness, but in respect to mystical experience. Abū Sa'īd and Ash-Shiblī are examples of two medieval Sufi mystics who allied the notions of ecstasy and "mental disturbance" when dealing with the subject of divine union. Mystical madness -- obsession with God -- was thought to draw one further into God, while common sanity drives one away. Al-Hujwārī taught that some forms of rapture result in a temporary or permanent lunacy.²⁸

Now, if the mystic might be driven mad by his/her love of God and encounter with God, could not God the Source of that *holy madness* not be mad Himself? This question was postulated by the Sufi and answered in the affirmative. Dols writes,

The only reality was mystical madness, the absorption of oneself in the love of God. And the final alternative was that God was mad.²⁹

As the Sufi mystic, Rumi (1207 - 1273), proclaimed,

Love [mahabbat], and ardent love ['ishq] also, is an

²⁷ Rabia, Cited in *First Among Sufis: The Life and Thought of Rabia al-Adawiyya, The Woman Saint of Basra*, Widad El Sakkakini, trans. Nabil Safwat (London: Octagon Press, 1982), 70.

²⁸ Dols, *Majūn*, 384-385, 386, 388.

²⁹ Dols, *Majūn*, 394.

attribute of God.³⁰

For Rumi, God is a kind of *opiate*, not merely by His effects upon mystics, but in some sense according to nature. God as *Opiate* does not obscure vision but opens vision; does not drug yet addicts and induces a *holy madness*.

Intellect ate some opium from Love's hand: Now watch out
for intellect's madness!³¹

Experiencing what he believes is Divine Madness, Rumi proceeds to question the sanity of social convention and its *respectability* in the light of the superiority of Divine Madness over human reason. Rumi critiques the status-quo man or woman as working out of a "frozen state" of intellect in comparison to the *Mad God*.³² Furthermore, the *madness* of God is demonstrated in jealousy -- a divine possessiveness at all costs -- according to Rumi. Thus Rumi in his poem, *Love The Life*, puts the following words in the mouth of God as God speaks to the object of His desire,

Thou art Mine alone.³³

How so reminiscent of the God of Exodus, Whose name and attribute is "*jealous*": *zelotes* (Ex 20:5, 34:14). There is a telling parallel with the depiction of Jesus' Abba as a shepherd taking a risk in leaving behind ninety-nine sheep to go off in search of

³⁰ Rumi, Jalal al-Din, *Love and Fear, Rūmī, Poet and Mystic: Selections from His Writings*, trans. Reynold A. Nicholson (London: George Allen, [1950] 1963), 102.

³¹ Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Diwan-i Sams-i Tabrizi, The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*, trans. William C. Chittick (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1983), 230.

³² Rumi, *Diwan-i Shams-i Tabrizi*, 231, 229.

³³ Rumi, Jalal al-Din, "Love The Life," *The Rubā'iyāt of Jalal al-Din Rumi*, trans. A.J. Arberry (London: Emery Walker, 1949), 124.

only one which has strayed (Mt 18:12-13).

The Sufi and Islamic medical notions of love-sickness entering Europe were not only dependent upon the presence of Moslems in pre- and Renaissance Spain, but Christians were also vehicles. The monk-physician, Constantine (d. 1087), known for his book *Viaticum*, helped also to spread the Arabic concept of 'ishq to Europe through Italy. Having arrived in Spain, the concept then travelled "from Spain in Andalusian poetry" back out to the rest of Europe.³⁴

The Spanish route was then later reinforced by Gerard of Cremona's [d. 1187] Toledan translations of other Arabic medical works dealing with the disease of love.³⁵

Giles of Santarem, Spain (1184 - 1265), a Dominican friar, wrote *Gloss on the Viaticum*, helping to further define the phenomenon and to assist the spread of the concept. On the populist front Fernando de Rojas in 1499 further brought love-sickness to public attention by way of his play, *La Celestina*.³⁶ Clavière notes that Joanna, wife of Philip the Fair and daughter of Queen Isabella, was well-known for her bouts of love-sickness over Philip. Her fits were characterized by hysteria, paralysis and pining, all transpiring at their castle in Medina del Campo.³⁷

³⁴ Mary Frances Wack, "From Mental Faculties to Magical Philters: The Entry of Magic into Academic Medical Writing on Lovesickness," *Eros and Anteros: The Medical Traditions of Love in the Renaissance*, ed. Donald A. Beecher and Massimo Clavoletta (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 32, 34-35. See also Stanley W. Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression: From Hippocratic Times to Modern Times* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 47.

³⁵ Wack, "From Mental Faculties," 38.

³⁶ Wack, "From Mental Faculties," 74, 75, 21.

³⁷ Rene de Maulde la Clavière, *The Women of the Renaissance: A Study of Feminism*, trans. George Herbert Ely (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1900), 115.

On the religious front of Christianity, Europe had known various examples of mystical and theological love-sickness. Pope St. Gregory the Great (@540 - 604) fondly wrote of the phenomenon of *anhelare*, "panting" after God/Christ in spiritual desire. Furthermore, Gregory believed God uses love-play to intensify this longing.³⁸ More than 500 years later, Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129) was known for his mystical deep kissing of Jesus during visionary contemplation.³⁹ According to McGinn, Rupert was quite vivid in his description. Rupert writes that in a vision he placed his tongue into the mouth of Jesus so as to kiss Him that much more fully. At one point in his mystical life, Rupert recalls being in a missionary position and Christ descending, prone, onto Rupert, passing into Rupert (via a sort of displaced intercourse).⁴⁰ Julian of Mt. Cornillon (13th century), for example, "suffered the sickness of love, which her sisters mistook for physical illness."⁴¹ Several honorable theologians co-opted medical terminology on love-sickness to explain rapture. For example, such love-sick interpretations of rapture were made by William of Auvergne in *De anima*, William of Auxerre in *Summa Aurea*, and Hugh of St. Cher in *De Doctrina Cordis*.⁴² St. John of the Cross betrays

³⁸ Bernard McGinn, *The Growth of Mysticism: Gregory the Great through the 12th Century* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1996), 59, 61.

³⁹ Wack, "From Mental Faculties," 24.

⁴⁰ McGinn, *Growth in Mysticism*, 332.

⁴¹ Wack, "From Mental Faculties," 25.

⁴² Wack, "From Mental Faculties," 23-24.

an aspect of love-sickness in his own mysticism when in his poem, "*Vivo sin vivir en mí*," he repeats the refrain nine times as in a novena -- almost lamentation -- of love, *Muero porque no muero*: "I die because I do not die." In his poem, "*Por toda la h[er]mosura*," John notes that God can make the soul *amor adolece*: "sick with love."⁴³

F. Therapeutic Coitus

The medical community, from the early Christian centuries and even into the Renaissance, suggested coitus as a therapeutic remedy for mental and emotional ailments. As Mary Frances Wack writes,

Therapeutic intercourse, a cure that ancient medicine particularly recommended for melancholy and mania, was a therapy whose aim was to restore proper humoral balance.

It was also recommended for the subcategory of melancholia, namely love-sickness. Prostitutes were often chosen to provide such services.⁴⁴ Byzantium gave us Oribasius of Pegamon (325 - 403) who suggested coitus as the most effective cure for melancholy. Paul of Aegina (625 - 690) in his time concurred. The Moslem convert to Christianity, Constantius Africanus (1020? - 1087), also held to this position.⁴⁵ Avicenna suggested coitus as being curative, but promoted such in the context of "therapeutic marriages." Medieval

⁴³ John of the Cross, "*Por toda la h[er]mosura*," 3. It should be noted here that many of John's works postdate those of Teresa. But it is significant to include them, since not only did John and Teresa mutually discuss spiritual matters, John's writings help to clue us into the mystical milieu of the period in which Teresa was immersed.

⁴⁴ Wack, "From Mental Faculties," 41, 39.

⁴⁵ Stanley W. Jackson, *Melancholia and Depression: From Hippocratic Times to Modern Times* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 51, 56, 61.

physicians often "recommended therapeutic intercourse despite its prohibition by the Church."⁴⁶

G. The Game of Seduction

Seduction was quite a popular theme and phenomenon of Renaissance Spain. J. Wesley Childers, in his *Tales From Spanish Picaresque Novels: A Motif-Index*, catalogues the high frequency in which seduction was a literary theme in Spanish novels. The male character was often portrayed as a *picaro* (rogue), a trickster of sorts, who tries his best at satiating his lusts.⁴⁷ Mary Elizabeth Perry argues that "upper-class" males in day-to-day existence "considered as fair game females of a class inferior to their own" for purposes of seduction.⁴⁸ To properly appreciate these remarks though, it is necessary to recall that the key to sexuality, as stated above, was believed *securely* held in the possession of the female. The feminine persona was always and everywhere deemed sexually undisciplined, whether or not she was in actuality. According to Marilyn Boxer and Jean Quataert,

Prey to a hysterical animal within her [the uterus], woman could not control her emotions, nor discipline her sexual impulses, nor act in any consistent fashion according to reason.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Wack, "From Mental Faculties," 68, 15.

⁴⁷ J. Wesley Childers, *Tales From Spanish Picaresque Novels: A Motif-Index* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1977), 146-147.

⁴⁸ Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 59.

⁴⁹ Marilyn J. Boxer and Jean H. Quataert, "Overview, 1500 - 1750," *Connecting Spheres: Women in the Western World, 1500 to the Present*, ed. Marilyn J. Boxer and Jean H. Quataert (Oxford University Press, 1987), 24.

It is the female, in particular or in general, directly or in principle, who incites the male's passion. This notion is a given, however roguish the male is in his first *response* and consequent attempts to *seduce*. Whatever results sexually between the male and female partners, (however demeaning to the woman in our eyes today) is exactly what the female *really* wanted. The *female animal* is the one who orchestrates all matters of love. Commentating on the work, *Policraticus* -- which was influential on Renaissance notions of male-female interplay -- Cary Nederman and N. Elaine Lawson maintain that

since women from the time of Eve have been particularly prone to sexual temptation, all the forms of courtly machination, culminating in the carnal act, must be credited to the feminine gender.⁵⁰

The Spanish male could -- and often did -- incur damages for his part in the game of seduction. Damages included the successful efforts to obtain the seduced woman a marriage *appropriate* to her social standing, and compensatory funds paid to her father.⁵¹

John of the Cross includes the notion of seduction when writing on the dealings of the mystic with God. In *Cantico Espiritual*, both the poem and the book (Redacción Definitiva), John writes of the attraction and appeal which the soul that is humble possesses *over* and *against* God. As for the poem, John makes much

⁵⁰ Cary J. Nederman and N. Elaine Lawson, "The Frivolities of Courtiers Follow the Footprints of Women: Public Women and The Crisis of Virility in John of Salisbury," *Ambiguous Realities: Women in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Carole Levin and Jeannie Watson (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1987), 90-91.

⁵¹ Perry, *Gender and Disorder*, 59.

of the Vulgate version of Songs 4:9, *Et in uno crine colli tui: "And with one hair of your neck,"* as if this allegorical *hair* of virtue by its mere existence on the neck of the soul could infatuate God.⁵² John insists in the book that the soul is quite able to move/shake (*mover*) God into pursuing the soul and into loving her more,⁵³ i.e. that the soul was capable of inducing God into initiating seductive play by reason of her virtue.

H. Abduction

To appreciate the relative frequency of abduction or fascination therewith, let us consider for a moment how the Parliament in France dealt with abduction during the sixteenth century. Sarah Hanley writes,

In 1578 the Parlement registered the Ordinance of Blois...[which] decreed that persons who married without parental approval would be charged with the crime of *rapt de violence* [forced abduction] or *rapt de séduction* [willing elopement], and worse, it declared the crime of *rapt* a capital offense punishable by death.⁵⁴

Abduction was a seemingly universal *problem* in Western Europe. What were a few of the ways in which abduction and the notion of abduction found itself manifested in Spanish cultural and religious circles? In Spain, the literature made entertaining and light about the matter. Female literary characters were held and/or

⁵² John of the Cross, "*Cantico Espiritual*," 31.

⁵³ John of the Cross, *Cantico Espiritual (Redacción Definitiva)*, 13:12.

⁵⁴ Sarah Hanley, "Family and State in Early Modern France: the Marriage Pact," *Connecting Spheres: Women in the Western World, 1500 to the Present*, ed. Marilyn Boxer and Jean H. Quataert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 57.

taken against their will, sometimes for marriage, sometimes to be raped. Often the female character was forced to trick the *picaro* into her freedom, as she lacked the physical strength to resist his advances. Thus, for example, one female character tricks her "importunate lover" into leaving her to go off and buy a ring, only for her to hide in the meanwhile where subsequently the *picaro* could not find her. Again, a female character is said to have had her squire pose as a ghost to frighten her abductor away. Another female character is said to have made her way off dressed in male attire.⁵⁵ George Riley Scott notes that even some Inquisitors were involved in the act of abduction:

Many of the inquisitors were sadists. Many were libidinous monsters. They took such women as they wanted, on trumped-up charges of heresy, and kept them for the rest of their days as mistresses.⁵⁶

The medieval Sufi tradition of ecstasy as being an abduction by God of the mystic was also imported into Spain among the surviving *moriscos*. Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207 - 1273) is the prime example of this medieval Sufi notion of ecstasy. In "*Like This*," Rumi writes,

You pull my lead-rope one way, then the other.⁵⁷

In the twentieth verse of his poem, "*Love The Tyrant*," Rumi professes again the abductive and even *hostile* character of God towards the mystic:

Love takes thee by the
ear, to lead

⁵⁵ Childers, *Tales*, 144-145.

⁵⁶ George Riley Scott, *A History of Torture* (Guernsey: Guernsey Press, 1995), 75.

⁵⁷ Jalal al-Din Rumi, *Like This*, ed. & trans. Coleman Barks (Athens, GA: Maypop, 1990), 42.

Thee on, His prisoner.⁵⁸

I. Rape

To discuss the topic of rape, one will have to suspend judgment based upon our twentieth century perspective towards the raping of women. The period in Spain ought to be judged contextually on its own merits and demerits.

In the arena of literature, rape was quite a popular theme. The Old French pastourelles contributed to the Spanish genre, *Libros de caballerías*. "In one-fifth of the extant French pastourelles, the shepherdess is raped by the medieval knight," writes Kathryn Gravdal.

The pastourelle often shows rape not as a form of violence but as a form of...female pleasure. ...The shepherdess resists the knight's advances, cries and struggles when he pulls her to the ground, only to end up thanking him when he leaves, and begging him to return.⁵⁹

It was similar texts which Teresa was fond of reading as a child.⁶⁰ In the picaresque novels there were plenty of examples of the rogue committing sexual assault. Sometimes texts were devoted not to an actual rape, but the fear of rape or the need of escaping a potential violation.⁶¹ Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron*, which

⁵⁸ Jalal al-Din Rumi, *The Rubā'iyāt of Jalal al-Din Rumi*, trans. A.J. Arberry (London: Emery Walker, 1949), 137.

⁵⁹ Kathryn Gravdal, "Camouflaging Rape: The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in the Medieval Pastourelle," *Romantic Review* LXXVI (November 1985): 361-362, 364.

⁶⁰ Teresa refers to her books on chivalry as *libros de caballerías*: "books on knights." *Vida* 2:1.

⁶¹ Childers, *Tales*, 149, 234-235.

has a significant impact on European literature, "juxtapositions" military and sexual conquest. The erotic-like violence with which Amadour "recklessly" sets out to combat Spain, parallels and intersects the erotic violence involved in his plot to rape Floride. Here valor and machismo are equated literarily.⁶²

There was an artistic fascination with the rape of women, and so rape was regularly addressed in various degrees in the visual arts. Common themes of depiction were the *mythological-style* violation of Lucretia, the Sabines,⁶³ Hippo or the wives of the Cimbrians.⁶⁴ Often these portrayals depicted the onset of violation. But Italian art of the period often realistically detailed sexual domination of women and even rape-penetration. This explicit Italian-style art spread throughout the whole of Western Europe.⁶⁵

The period morality of Spain also commonly expressed itself in the actual perpetration of rape. In many parts of Europe, rape was often excused (if the raper was aristocratic, and the victim was of a lower class), ignored, or treated with public bravado.⁶⁶ One secondary source I have encountered, even claims that St. Ignatius

⁶² Carla Freccero, "Rape's Disfiguring Figures: Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron*, Day 1:10," *Rape and Representation*, ed. Lynn A. Higgins and Brenda R. Silver (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), 230, 231.

⁶³ Norman Bryson, "Two Narratives of Rape in the Visual Arts: Lucretia and the Sabine Women", *Rape: An Historical and Cultural Enquiry*, ed. Sylvana Tomaselli and Roy Porter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 152-173.

⁶⁴ Jordan, "Boccaccia's In-Famous Women," 39.

⁶⁵ Richard Bentley, *Erotic Art* (New York, NY: Quartet Books, 1984), 69, 54, 55, 73, 63.

⁶⁶ See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 530, 532-533; Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Sex in the Western World: The Development of Attitudes and Behavior*, trans. Sue Collins (Philadelphia, PA: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1981), 272.

of Loyola was repeatably found guilty of rape prior to his religious conversion.⁶⁷ Current scholarship has shown that torturers for the Inquisition were known to frequent their women prisoners against the latters' wills.⁶⁸

J. Spiritual Incest

Marc Shell, in *The Want of Incest in the Human Family*, insists that there has always been a quasi-incestuous aspect within Christianity, albeit not previously recognized as such. By proposing this, Shell acknowledges a spiritual eros, having incestuous-like characteristics, to be found in the great mysteries of Christianity. I maintain that such eroticism, especially in Catholic mysticism -- though, also throughout Christianity in general -- has been an unspoken undercurrent, accepted without critical analysis. This incestuous-like milieu has colored the Catholic notions of Trinity, Jesus, Mary and the mystic, chiefly in an unconscious and unquestioning manner. Yet, it remains the context in which mystical relationships have been discovered and worked out, for example Teresa of Avila's spiritual encounters.

One example of this incestuous-like aspect (orientation) in Christianity, according to Shell is the "Holy Family" of God the Father, Mary of Nazareth and Jesus Christ.

⁶⁷ Manfred Barthel, *The Jesuits: History and Legend of the Society of Jesus*, trans. Mark Howson (New York, NY: William Morrow, 1984), 20-21.

⁶⁸ Helena Sánchez Ortega, *La Mujer Y La Sexualidad En El Antiguo Régimen* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 1992), 51.

Mary is fully affined to God⁶⁹ as God's fourfold kin: Mary is His sibling, spouse, parent, and child.

Shell repeats himself again, but more fully:

Mary is the human female parent of God as Son [she parented Christ],⁷⁰ the spouse of God, the sibling of God [Jesus and she are children of the same Father], and the child of God.

Furthermore, Mary has been recognized by the Church as a *sponsa Christi*.⁷¹ Had not a number of Church Fathers, such as St. Irenaeus (*Against Heresies*), St. Jerome (*Epistle 22*), St. Augustine (*Sermons 51 & 232*), St. John Chrysostom (*On the Psalms :44*; Homily, *De coemeterio et de cruce*), St. John Damascene (*Homily 2*), Bl. Gueric of Igny (Sermon 1) and St. Proclus of Constantinople (Sermon on the Nativity of the Lord) for example, treated Mary as the Eve of Jesus? And is this theological tradition not based upon Paul's testimony of Jesus as New Adam (e.g. 1 Cor 15:45)? Even in the poetry of John of the Cross, Mary is treated as both spouse and mother of the Word of God.⁷²

John of the Cross also goes on to treat the nature of the Blessed Trinity in an incestuous-like manner. For John, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit stand against each other as *Amante* (Lover) to *Amado* (Beloved), together as one *Amante*.⁷³

⁶⁹ Here the Trinity is treated as Godhead.

⁷⁰ Parentheses are Shell's.

⁷¹ Marc Shell, "The Want of Incest in the Human Family: Or, Kin and Kind in Christian Thought," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* LXII (Fall 1994): 627-628.

⁷² John of the Cross, "Romance sobre el evangelio 'In principio erat Verbum,' acerca de la Santísima Trinidad," prosigue 7, 8, 9.

⁷³ John of the Cross, "Romances," 1.

Again, according to Gospel tradition, Jesus Christ is our Brother (Mt 12:50). But the mystical tradition within Christianity views Jesus Christ concurrently as Spouse. Thus, for example, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, Richard Rolle, Luis de Leon (a professor of John of the Cross) and St. John of the Cross, among others, treat the *Canticle of Canticles* as a love poem, both as an allegorical and analogical depiction of the spousal relationship between Jesus and the Christian mystic as inferred by Paul (Eph 5:21-33) and Revelation (21:1). For this reason Judy B. McInnis argues that there is both an "orgiastic" and an "incestuous" aspect to John (of the Cross)'s understanding of the Canticle, not as mere metaphor, but as a "reality through the Incarnation and Crucifixion."⁷⁴

According to most of Catholic mysticism, the mystic seeks consummate union with God as beloved to Lover, spouse to Spouse,⁷⁵ but in a familial context: God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with each the Lover of the other; and the mystic as son/daughter, brother/sister, father/mother and lover.⁷⁶ The disparate sexual identities within the human personality (heterosexual, homosexual,

⁷⁴ Judy B. McInnis, "Eucharistic and Conjugal Symbolism in The Spiritual Canticle of Saint John of the Cross," *Renascence: Essays on Values in Literature* XXXVI (Spring 1984): 122.

⁷⁵ St. Ignatius of Loyola has been viewed as an exception. As Michael Ivens writes, "The Trinity for Ignatius is emphatically the creator and redeemer God...Union is union-in-service, the involvement of the human person in the redemptive work of the Trinity in the world." Michael Ivens, "Ignatius Loyola," *The Study of Spirituality*, ed. Cheslyn Jones, Geoffrey Wainwright and Edward Yarnold, SJ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 361.

⁷⁶ John of the Cross notes that the soul seeks out Christ, her Bridegroom as Word of God, and at the same time the Father is feeding and resting in the Word in glory and love. *Cantico Espiritual (Redacción Definitiva)*, 1:5.

sibling, spouse, lover, parent etc), it seems, are pulled together as a unified force to bring forth new and spiritual life in a multifaceted way. While no human person may be all things to another person, God is viewed here as the ultimate fulfilment of the human personality,⁷⁷ and thus, it would seem, is the only one capable of satisfying and glorifying the entire person in all his/her dimensions. However much commentators and readers of mysticism do not see or would wish to shun the issue, there is an incestuous-like quality to Catholic mysticism, but without the exploitative elements of human incest.

Underlying the relational differences involved, fundamentally what is transpiring is rather *homology* -- the meeting or union of similars/identicals without the inequality and/or power plays involved nor the differences in identification or the lust as in incest. According to John of the Cross, God's love is *casta*, chaste.⁷⁸ As was noted, "Agape-passion" involves an "erotic unleashing of the death drive" which results in being "made *homologous* to" God.⁷⁹ What we have on the spiritual plane is not the classical incest of Roman and Greek gods among themselves or with humans but *homologism*. The Persons of the Trinity are *homoousian*, while God and the mystic are *at some level of being* -- by participation in God and the accommodation of the mystic --

⁷⁷ See for example, John of the Cross, *Cantico Espiritual (Redacción Definitiva)*, 14 & 15:5.

⁷⁸ John of the Cross, *Cantico Espiritual (Redacción Definitiva)*, 13:2.

⁷⁹ Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1987), 144.

homoiousian, the human personality being identified with God. As St. Teresa writes, that during rapture there is a *transformamiento del alma del todo en Dios*: "total transformation of the soul into God."⁸⁰

K. Male Dominance, Civil and Religious

Both civil and religious situations saw the male/male-figure as in a position of dominance. In spite of the attractiveness, the lack of sexual control or love-sickness on the part of a female, the male was deemed in control in all other social and ecclesial realms. He was to function always from a position of power.

The Renaissance Church inherited the medieval ecclesial proscription that intercourse between husband and wife was to transpire solely in the missionary position. Any marital position in which the wife was not "stretched out on her back with the man on top" was considered "scandalous and 'unnatural'."⁸¹ Even though the female was thought more sexually cunning, as well as feeding a voracious sexual appetite, the male was to establish a role of dominance. Truly the male, in his mind, was to achieve a conquest of the female. Given the thought of the day, one would have to conclude that such bedroom positions would be little more than artifice, though, given the supposed vitality of the sexual appetite of the female. Indeed, in all situations, the wife was to

⁸⁰ *Vida* 20:18.

⁸¹ Jean-Louis Flandrin, "Sex in Married Life in the Early Middle Ages: The Church's Teaching and Behavioural Reality," *Western Sexuality: Practice and Precept in Past and Present Times*, ed. Philippe Ariès and André Béjin, trans. Anthony Forster (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 120.

consider herself the "subject" of her husband,⁸² despite the inconsistency of thought.

The notion of male dominance was also familiar to Sephardic Jewry. Even more permissive to the husband, the rabbinic tradition of the Babylonian Talmud recognized that

a man may do whatever he pleases with his wife [during intercourse].⁸³

The husband was able to make most sexual demands he wanted of his wife.

When dealing with God as a male-figure, St. John of the Cross speaks in terms of God *coming upon and conquering* the soul's passions.⁸⁴ In similar fashion, Rumi writes of the soul as "prey" to the *seizing* of God/Love.⁸⁵ The soul is also depicted as a "grape" which may be "trampled upon" by God, unable to resist His forceful overtures.⁸⁶

L. Rabbinic Marital Laws

Sephardic Jewry brought with it and fostered the rabbinic customs found in the *Babylonian Talmud*. While some aspects of the marriage customs ceremonies differed from the rest of European

⁸² Clavière, *The Women of the Renaissance*, 110.

⁸³ *Hebrew-English Edition of the Babylonian Talmud*, trans. Rabbi H. Freedman, ed. Rabbi I. Epstein (London: Socino Press, 1985), *Nedarim* 20b.

⁸⁴ John of the Cross, *Cantico Espiritual (Redacción Definitiva)*, 20 & 21:7.

⁸⁵ See Jalal al-Din Rumi, "Ecstatic Moment," 24; "Love The Life," 28; "Love The Tyrant," 29; *The Rubā'iyāt of Jalal al-Din Rumi*, trans. A.J. Arberry (London: Emery Walker, 1949).

⁸⁶ Rumi, "Love The Life," 33.

Jewry, the Sephardim preserved the fundamental laws prescribed for all Jews.

Betrothal was the first stage of marriage in which, usually after a contract was signed, the espoused now were considered a unique couple. While the *Encyclopedia Judaica* maintains that "the promise [of betrothal] does not give either party the right to claim specific [sexual] performance from the other" during the period of betrothal,⁸⁷ the Kiddushin of the *Talmud* makes it very clear that intercourse is a real option in the betrothal process. A woman may be betrothed by an act of intercourse.⁸⁸ Though, it should be noted that consensual intercourse by the betrothal parties at any time would *require* the final marriage to transpire.⁸⁹

There are other laws governing intercourse by seduction and intercourse by rape. The *Talmud* specifies that the seducer and violator (rapist) might be forced to marry the involved woman should the woman so desire.⁹⁰ According to a commentary on the *Talmud*, it was understood that the father must concur in the determination as to whether a seducer or a rapist must marry the victim.⁹¹ Regardless, the rapist *must* marry the woman if she held

⁸⁷ "Betrothal," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 4 (New York, NY: The Macmillan Co.), 754.

⁸⁸ *Babylonian Talmud*, Kiddushin 9b.

⁸⁹ "Betrothal," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 754.

⁹⁰ *Babylonian Talmud*, Kethuboth 39b.

⁹¹ Joseph Yahuda, *Law and Life According To Hebrew Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), 114-115.

him to it; the seducer was often let go with a fine.⁹²

M. Wife-beating

Wife-beating was a popular *pastime*. According to Eileen Power, "canon law specifically allowed wife-beating."⁹³ In sixteenth century Spain, this was translated into husbands employing "blows" (*los golpes*), "pokings" (*los puntillazos*) and "slaps to the face" (*las bofetadas*) on a regular basis. Some husbands even horse-whipped their wives: *Los maridos azotaban sus mujeres*.⁹⁴ Teresa noted in *Fundaciones* that husbands were known even to kill their wives.⁹⁵ In *Vida*, Teresa acknowledged that she herself had a great fear of marriage dynamics.⁹⁶ As R. de Maulde la Clavière characterized the period:

Her husband spoke to her stick in hand. The stick! that was [believed] the only argument the women understood.⁹⁷

N. Torture

Fourteenth century Spain (and later) saw the employment of various forms of torture to bring about obedience and conformity in both the civil and ecclesial forums. One of the prominent forms of

⁹² *Babylonian Talmud*, Kethuboth 39b.

⁹³ Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, ed. M.M. Postan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 16.

⁹⁴ Mariló Vigil, *La Vida De Las Mujeres En Los Siglos XVI Y XVII* (Madrid: Siglo XXI De España Editores, 1986), 103. See also Schur, 158.

⁹⁵ *Fundaciones* 32:46.

⁹⁶ *Vida* 3:2.

⁹⁷ Clavière, *The Women of the Renaissance*, 110.

torture was stretching and disjointing. This could be achieved by various methods. For example, prisoners would be stretched to death, being "hung/suspended" (*colgado*) and "weighted" (*cargado*). Sometimes a method employed would go beyond disjointing. Persons, for example, could be pulled apart by all four limbs (*Partanlos por miembros*). This latter practice was carried into the sixteenth century and found its way into the New World.⁹⁸ Another way of achieving first, dislocation, and second, dismemberment, was "The Donkey." The condemned would be strattled over an A-frame with weights being increased on all four appendages until the body became two.⁹⁹

There were several other *popular* ways of forcing bodily dislocations. The rack "was bound to cause dislocation of the joints or to drag off the members" when over-applied. Another *tool* of punishment or exaction of testimony was the pulley: "The process was repeated again and again until the culprit confessed or became unconscious."¹⁰⁰ Both the rack and the pulley were frequented by the torturers employed by the Spanish Inquisition.¹⁰¹

Recent studies have shown, according to Grethe Skylv, that "all forms of torture include an overtone of sexual

⁹⁸ Juan Eslava, *Verdugos Y Torturadores* (Madrid: Ediciones Temas de Hoy, 1991), 124, 156-157).

⁹⁹ John Swain, *The Pleasures of the Torture Chamber* (London: Noel Douglas, 1931), 138.

¹⁰⁰ George Riley Scott, *A History of Torture* (Guernsey: Guernsey Press, 1995), 169, 168.

¹⁰¹ Swain, *Pleasures*, 169.

humiliation."¹⁰²

O. The Cautery

The cautery -- that is, burning with hot pokers -- was employed in sixteenth century Spain for various reasons. Teresa notes, for example, that the cautery was used in the treatment of breast cancer.¹⁰³ Islamic Spain, assuming medieval medical practice, used the cautery for the treatment of melancholia. For example, Abulcasis (d. 1106 AD)¹⁰⁴ prescribed the cautery, yet Avenzoar (1113 - 1162) condemned its application to the forehead as an unnecessary and brutal psychiatric procedure.¹⁰⁵ Still, medicine was not the sole use of the cautery; the Inquisition also employed it as a form of torture.¹⁰⁶ In the New World, this form of torture was primarily applied to native women.¹⁰⁷

In *Llama De Amor Viva*, John of the Cross speaks of a spiritual cautery caused by the Holy Spirit to effect the state of transforming union. This may be either an intellectual cauterization or one caused by an angel wielding a dart or arrow. The soul is said to turn into a living flame of love. All her

¹⁰² Grethe Skylv, "The Physical Sequelae of Torture", *Torture and Its Consequences: Current Treatment Approaches*, ed. Metin Başoğlu (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 50.

¹⁰³ *Fundaciones* 22:16.

¹⁰⁴ Howells, *World History*, 95.

¹⁰⁵ Alexander and Selesnick, *The History of Psychiatry*, 64

¹⁰⁶ Scott, *A History of Torture*, 82.

¹⁰⁷ Eslava, *Verdugos*, 154.

previous moral and emotional wounds caused by sin or misfortune are turned into life-yielding wounds from which love is intensified. Thus the spiritual cautery of the Holy Spirit is not only a vehicle of divine love, but a profound curative means.¹⁰⁸

P. Martyrology

An influential book on Renaissance spirituality and the understanding of sanctity, was Jacobi de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*,¹⁰⁹ otherwise known as *Flos Sanctorum*. The *Legenda* was read not only as a hagiography -- a collection of lives of the saints -- but as a *vade mecum*, a manual of asceticism. This is the manner in which St. Ignatius of Loyola employed it,¹¹⁰ and how Teresa advised her spiritual sisters that it should be used.¹¹¹

The *Legenda* presents a near-unanimous picture of women saints as victims. Almost every female entry is a martyr or quasi-martyr of some sort. The message was quite straightforward: the manner in which women are to appreciate and attempt sanctity is through some sort of victimization or an attitude thereof. Women are to approach God and the Church in a spirit of victimhood. There are

¹⁰⁸ John of the Cross, *Llana De Amor Viva*, 2:2-15. It should be noted that Teresa of Avila's *Vida* in which she describes her cauterization (transverberation) is dated 1588. John is said to have written most of his commentaries on his poetry starting in 1582. Though following Teresa in time, it is important for us to consider John's understanding of the phenomenon since this will help us to appreciate what was in Teresa's mind which she confided to John. And so, it is appropriate that I include this Johannine interpretation here, even though not formative of Teresa.

¹⁰⁹ Jacobi de Voragine, *Legenda Aurea: Vulgo Histoiria Lombardica Dicta*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Lipsiae, 1850).

¹¹⁰ Ignatius of Loyola, *Autobiografia, Obras Completas*, Tomo I (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, 1947), 125.

¹¹¹ *Constituciones*, 8.

several categories and examples of female victim-saints included in the *Legenda* which will prove pertinent to this study.

The first classification of female victim-saint is the near-rape victim. Falling within this category are Sts. Anastasia, who was given to another husband that he might forcibly take her virginity;¹¹² Lucy, whom Paschasius threatens to send to a house of ill-fame to be "violated;"¹¹³ and Agnes, who was stripped and led through such a house for the purpose of violation.¹¹⁴ The judge, Appellianus, is recorded to have fostered high hopes of raping St. Euphemia himself.¹¹⁵

The second pertinent classification of female victim-saint for my line of argument is the *martyr of dislocation*. Examples of women who were stretched to dislocation or dismemberment are: the third daughter of St. Sophia;¹¹⁶ Euphemia;¹¹⁷ Christina;¹¹⁸ Agatha;¹¹⁹ Juliana;¹²⁰ and Petronella.¹²¹

The third classification is that of cautery or piercing. St.

¹¹² Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 48.

¹¹³ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 31.

¹¹⁴ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 115.

¹¹⁵ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 621.

¹¹⁶ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 203-204.

¹¹⁷ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 621.

¹¹⁸ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 420.

¹¹⁹ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 171.

¹²⁰ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 178.

¹²¹ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 343.

Margaret was cauterized.¹²² The following were thrust through by a sword (*gladius*) in various parts of the body: Lucy;¹²³ Agnes;¹²⁴ the second daughter of St. Sophia;¹²⁵ Euphemia;¹²⁶ and Perpetua and Felicity.¹²⁷ St. Christina was shot in the heart and side by arrows (*sagittae*).¹²⁸

¹²² Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 402.

¹²³ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 32.

¹²⁴ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 115.

¹²⁵ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 203.

¹²⁶ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 622.

¹²⁷ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 799.

¹²⁸ Voragine, *Legenda Aurea*, 421.

2. Violence and Eros in Teresa of Avila's *Arrobamientos*

The previous discussion dealt with religious and cultural postures. The purpose was to inculcate sensitivity towards the language employed by Teresa regarding ecstatic-like phenomena. As I stated at the beginning of the last section, three factors are involved in these mystical phenomena and the description thereof: (1) Teresa's appropriation of religious and cultural expressions to explain transcendence in a language familiar to herself and those for whom she wrote; (2) the conditioning factor which Teresa's milieu had upon her, contributing to the manner in which she anticipated/received raptures; (3) the fashion in which Trinity chose to intersect history, employing the historical (both social and personal) so as to communicate the transhistorical. The present section will focus on the descriptives Teresa employs to explain her raptures, and what violent and erotic messages Teresa inferred by these illustrations. Teresa's illustrations will be set up in parallel fashion with the subsections of the preceding discussion for two reasons. First. In some fashion these descriptives will be compared and contrasted with religious and cultural references to violence and eros, in the hopes of understanding the distinctiveness of religious violence and eros. Second. The parallelism will allow for an implicit analogical appreciation which -- because the subject herself is not present and cannot make associations for us -- is the best which I maintain may be done in this regard. The parallelism, thus, will have to satisfy the need to speculate as to when and where Teresa

appropriates, Teresa is conditioned, or God accommodates to Teresa.

A. - D. The Mystical Prominence of Women and Purity of Religious Experience

There are several fundamental principles, among others, on which Teresa is adamant regarding religious experiences in general. Two of these principles focus on the involvement of women in mystical theology. The first concerns the frequency of women as participants in religious experiences: Teresa insists that God grants mystical favors to women more so than to men. The second concerns the profit women derive from these experiences, approaching them as opportunities for spiritual advancement, and when doing so, in a way much more effectively than men.

Teresa, deferring to St. Peter of Alcantara, argues that women *aprovechaban mucho más en este camino que hombres*: "excel much more along this path then (do) men."¹ One reason given by Teresa for women both numerically and qualitatively excelling over men in the mystical arena, is that men might be inclined to associate such things as raptures with weak minds, thus *typical* of women.² (Religious experience was not thought in the purview of *real* men.) Teresa infers that men tend to imagine themselves always rational and always in control, not emotive/spiritual and receptive/submissive. Again, Teresa suggests that males tend to place a higher value on an active role in religion, than a

¹ *Vida* 40:8.

² *Cuentas* 53 (58): 6 (5).

contemplative role, as one contributing more towards the service of God and Church.³

In chapter 16 of *Camino*, Teresa discusses what is necessary for the setting up of the "game" of contemplation. Teresa insists that humility, as well as the other virtues, are necessary for contemplation to occur. God, according to Teresa, will rarely come to those who are not dispossessed of their pride. In saying this, is Teresa not associating a difficulty or a lack of solicitude in men, more so than in women, as to the dispossession of pride? Yet, in *Moradas*, Teresa seems to qualify this by adamantly stating that mystical theology is rare -- *period* -- because many persons (male or female) are not properly disposed to contemplation through the practice of virtue.⁴

Finally, but not exclusively, Teresa consistently speaks of mysticism in a spousal context. The two are *never* separated. Implicit -- and never addressed directly by Teresa -- would be the notion that the average man is less attracted to a spousal relationship with Christ/God than the average female. This would seem to be due to what John Weir Perry, now, insists is a necessary transcendence of "homosexual panic" and a "reversal" of sexual relatedness. (According to Perry, these interior dynamics are something which not all men are capable of effecting in a mystical context.)⁵

³ *Camino* 1:2.

⁴ *Moradas* 5:1:2.

⁵ John Weir Perry, MD, *The Far Side of Madness* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974), 101.

Another important principle is the purity of religious experience. While there is bodily participation in raptures, the rapture begins in the *superior de el alma*: the "uppermost [part] of the soul."⁶ Raptures, at core, are spiritual events. But, Teresa proceeds further. A criterion for discerning spiritual experience is that the experience be *toda limpia y casta*: "completely clean and chaste."⁷ Teresa wants her audience to know that when God proceeds to espouse human persons, *Se desposa Dios con las almas espiritualmente*: "God espouses souls spiritually."⁸ The contrast, here, is not between spirit and body, but spiritual and carnal.⁹ While marriage between two human persons (and I suppose, sexual expression of any kind between two humans) is more -- sometimes less -- analogous to God's engagement of the human personality, in some ways it is *only* analogous. Spiritual marriage (and betrothal) is devoid of all inordinacy. Human sexuality -- which often allows for the carnal, we must add -- in comparison with mystical experience is *grosera*: "vulgar."¹⁰ Human sexuality, it seems, is also deemed *vulgar* by Teresa because it is historically bound, and thus inferior. It is true, as will be seen in more detail, that Teresa readily employs a language of sexuality when

⁶ *Cuentas* 54 (59): 8 (9).

⁷ *Cuentas* 53 (58): 24 (18).

⁸ *Moradas* 5:4:3.

⁹ But as will be argued shortly, Teresa's raptures in some sense resisted a full sensuality, a complete sense of embodiment.

¹⁰ *Moradas* 5:4:3.

discussing raptures. But here, and elsewhere in her writings, Teresa is effectively divorcing herself from the lustful aspects of popular culture, and I also suppose from real or imagined sexual excesses of the *alumbrados* with whom she was often compared.

In both of these areas, Teresa distinguishes mystical experience in general, thus raptures in particular, from popular misconceptions of women and sexuality. According to Teresa, women have a strength of character and a fidelity to God's call which allow for mystical experience. True, women are more susceptible to melancholia. In agreement with the psychology of the day, Teresa consistently critiques the notion of melancholy as she addresses the subject to her reading audience, mostly religious women. (Melancholy and abandoning prayer, seemingly, are the most dangerous pitfalls of the spiritual life.¹¹) Yet, women are also equally or more susceptible to profound relations with God/Christ. Again, the human person (male or female) is endowed with great dignity.¹² Such dignity allows for the human person to engage God in the most pure of fashions. In *Moradas*, Teresa offers an openness to mysticism as the way which more profoundly completes this human dignity. The human person is seen as fulfilling their destiny when its pursuit is achieved in God/Christ in a fashion devoid of the carnal, that is, the inordinate.

E. - F. Mystical Love-sickness and a Rapture-induced *Madness*

¹¹ *Moradas* IV:1:9.

¹² This is seen in Teresa's comparison of the soul with a diamond. *Moradas* 1:1:1.

L'érôtisme est autour de nous violent... Qui d'entre nous rêve de forcer les portes du royaume mystique,...se ruinant d'aimer?¹³

Teresa speaks frequently enough about *el tormento*¹⁴ -- the tormenting longings which come upon the soul during the same spiritual periods as raptures occur. These "yearnings" -- *las ansias*¹⁵ -- Teresa confesses, are caused by *el Amado*, "the Beloved,"¹⁶ the God/Christ Who is *tan celoso*: "very jealous,"¹⁷ much like the Sufi's *Jealous Allah*.

The mystic is quite stricken by this divine love-sickness. I say *divine* because, according to Teresa, such love-sickness does not originate in the self, but is brought on by the Holy Spirit. Thus Teresa also speaks as if overcome by "impulses" -- *impetus*.¹⁸ The soul, nay the whole person, is gripped tightly by God's love:

*Escondíaisos de mí y apretábaisme con vuestro amor, con una muerte tan sabrosa que nunca el alma querría salir de ella.*¹⁹

It is as if the mystic had no freedom and that a violence had come upon him/her:

¹³ "Eroticism about us is so violent...Who among us [does not] dream of forcing [open] the gates of the mystical kingdom,...ruining himself [in order] to love?" Georges Bataille, *L'Expérience Intérieure* (Paris: Gallimard, 1943), 185-186.

¹⁴ *Exclamaciones* 15:2.

¹⁵ *Vida* 20:13.

¹⁶ *Exclamaciones* 15:2.

¹⁷ *Camino* 22:8.

¹⁸ *Vida* 20: 8 (9).

¹⁹ "You conceal Yourself from me and grip me tightly with Your love through a death so daring that the soul would not wish to escape from it." *Vida* 29:8.

*Y esto con gran furor me da.*²⁰

But, however violent the descent upon and overtaking of the soul, as Teresa notes, the mystic has no wish to escape from such a constraining grasp by divine love-sickness. One may find an interesting parallel with Teresa's notation of the "demonic affectation" which occurred with frequency between men and women of her period, who employed "charms" to capture the wills of one another.²¹

The death to which Teresa refers is none other than spiritual love-sickness, *este mal*: "this sickness/disease."²² Indeed, such impulses of love are a malady of sorts. Teresa records a variety of related symptomatology: pining;²³ mono-fixation on the love-object;²⁴ difficulty with eating and sleeping;²⁵ nausea;²⁶ a desire for death,²⁷ running a real risk of suicide,²⁸ and a possible threat of mental breakdown.²⁹ This supernatural malady

²⁰ "And it [love-sickness {comes}] with great fury upon me." *Cuentas* 1:3.

²¹ *Vida* 5:5.

²² *Vida* 29:10. See also *Vida* 29:12.

²³ *Vida* 20:11.

²⁴ *Vida* 20:9.

²⁵ *Cuentas* 1:9 (7).

²⁶ "Turns of stomach": *las bascas*. *Cuentas* 1:4 (3).

²⁷ *Cuentas* 1:4 (3).

²⁸ *Camino* 19:13.

²⁹ Love-sickness is said, by Teresa, to threaten *quitar el juicio*: "to take away [one's] sanity." *Camino* 19:11. For all of these reasons, John of the Cross was quite right to maintain that God can render the soul "sick with love," as noted above. "*Por toda la h[er]mosura*," 3.

for/from God can also result in death, if it were not for raptures providing temporary relief:

*Y así ha habido personas que han muerto.*³⁰

Teresa states that the mystic, so lovingly afflicted, craves almost ravenously for a rapture to transpire: to have some experience of Him Who she so amorously desires, and to relieve the intense love-sick pain.³¹ God liberates the soul from the hold of His love-sickness by rapture.³² The rapture which follows the stirrings of love-sickness may carry one away into a sort of religious madness.³³ Writing of Fr. Mariano's apprenticing in the matter, Teresa says,

*Habia dado una suspensión o arrobamiento, que del todo le enajenó.*³⁴

The mystic not only experiences in some degree the Divine Mind which exceeds all of our categories (Is 55:8),³⁵ but is in a fashion taken out of him/herself and made temporarily imbalanced:

³⁰ "And so there have been persons who have died." *Camino* 19:8.

³¹ *Cuentas* 1:4 (3). In the popular Moslem notion of love-sickness, there is no successful or moral relief. Thus, Ibn al-Jawz 's argument that the love-smitten might plunge headlong into the most immoral of behavior to the detriment of self and others.

³² *Vida* 20:11. This enrapturing is analogous with *therapeutic coitus* in the treatment of love-sickness in particular, and melancholia in general: i.e. the treatment of malady by love/love-like encounters. The fullness of this analogy will be discovered when I take to discussing the *coital-like* peak which happens in rapture.

³³ This parallels al-Hujwiri's experience of Sufi mystical lunacy.

³⁴ "He had been given a suspension or rapture, that carried him completely away in madness." *Fundaciones* 28:31.

³⁵ And hence, might appear mad to us. Thus the Sufi exclamation that God is mad.

an internal disequilibrium transpires which is pleasurable.³⁶

In essence, God casts the soul-psyche into a sort of *holy melancholia* which it must endure until God/Christ judges the moment *ripe*. Only then does He wrench it away from its introverted-tainted love³⁷ and thrust it into a *holy mania which, for a moment is extroverted*, then back into melancholia.

One should note the parallel with love-sickness and with feminine sexuality as spelled out earlier. The soul is treated by Teresa as feminine in respect to God as masculine. The female in popular Spanish culture was deemed sex-starved and out of control. Analogously, the feminized mystic is made to be consumed with God, craving to express the violence of her affections in the violence of rapture (to be discussed shortly). The soul's temporary relief may be demonstrated in a series of raptures which have an erotomaniac aspect, a *woman's* affliction:³⁸ *Eroto* as in the love-sickness which is the setting for the raptures to transpire, and *manic* as to the disequilibrium of the following raptures. (A fuller sense of both elements of *erotomania* as found simultaneously in rapture will also be discussed shortly.) And since the mystic does not wish to be freed from the grasp of his/her love-smittenness except by a rapture in the love-object, there is an analogous quality to being *kept willingly* like a mistress. God and

³⁶ By Teresa's remarks it appears that the experience of "heavenly madness," which Teresa places in the "third water," may sometimes occur in conjunction with rapture in the "fourth water." For this reason, I am using Teresa's explanation of the "madness" phenomenon to clarify Fr. Mariano's encounter. See *Vida* 16 & 20.

³⁷ Love-sickness seems to have an element of self-pity.

³⁸ As stated above.

the mystic are also like mutual *objects of devotion*: devotees of each other.

G. Prelude to Rapture: Mystical Seduction

We do not believe in the reality of the raving God, despite the fact that those few of us who have any intelligence at all realize that He is raving within ourselves all the time.³⁹

The Teresa who knew all too well about seduction in her adolescent and early religious years⁴⁰ writes of raptures in a fashion depicting a dynamic of seduction.

Teresa portrays God as if consumed with the desire of conquest, as a determined and forceful Paramour. This God is One Who sometimes pursues the mystic as would a "hunter".⁴¹ Following from her love-sickness the mystic soul *heats* God's/Christ's fire with games of flirtation, and this leads to a reactive-seductive play on God's/Christ's part. As Teresa writes quite plainly, in another context though applicable here,

*Creo todos los hombres depenser más amigos de mujeres que ven inclinadas a virtud.*⁴²

Virtue, according to Teresa, as wielded by the female principle has an *enchanting power* over the male principle, and it is through virtue that the female principle maintains a share of control in the games of life and love:

³⁹ R.C. Zaehner, *Our Savage God* (London: Collins, 1974), 233.

⁴⁰ *Vida* 2:6, where Teresa's adolescent reputation is threatened by her suggested flirtatiousness; 5:6 where Teresa indiscreetly tries to lure an uncelibate priest away from his mistress towards herself.

⁴¹ *Cazador*. "Palabras," stanza 2.

⁴² "I believe that all men must be fond of women who are inclined to virtue." *Vida* 5:6.

*Y aun para lo que acá pretenden, deben de ganar con ellos
má por aquí.*⁴³

So convinced of this, Teresa translates these thoughts to her relationship with God and how the mystic might triumph over God/Christ. Referring to Sg 4:9 (VUL) and the hair on the beloved's neck which is said to have fascinated and captivated the attention of the Lover, Teresa envisions this hair as humility which entices God/Christ to the soul.⁴⁴ For, Teresa argues, the chaste humility of Mary drew the attention of God so thoroughly as to have the Son incarnate in Mary's womb:

*Ésta la trajo del cielo en las entrañas de la Virgen, y
con ella la traeremos nosotras de un cabello a nuestras
almas.*⁴⁵

Hence, by humility the soul in this love-game is able to refer to God/Christ as *me cautivo, mi prisionero*: "my Captive, my Prisoner."⁴⁶ While God/Christ assuages the mystic with a maddening love-sickness, the mystic responds with increasing humility, only for God/Christ to *find* Himself caught in the web of humility, so to speak. In *Moradas* Teresa reaffirms her position:

*¡Humildad, humildad!; por ésta se deja vencer el
Señor...*⁴⁷

Furthermore, Teresa warns the mystic that the general posture of

⁴³ "And, here, by this [enticement with virtue] they [women] may endeavor to win more from them [men]." *Vida* 5:6.

⁴⁴ Recall the similar thoughts of John of the Cross. "*Cantico Espiritual*," 31.

⁴⁵ "It brought Him from Heaven to the womb of the Virgin, and with it -- by one hair -- we bring Him to our souls." *Camino* (Codice de el Escorial) 24:2.

⁴⁶ "*Vivo Sin Vivir En Mí*," stanza 1.

⁴⁷ "Humility, humility! This is how the Lord allows Himself to be defeated/conquered." *Moradas* 4:2:9.

surrender to God's/Christ's will is able *traer al Todo poderoso...*: "to bring the Almighty to [us]."⁴⁸ Thus Teresa insists that the mystic allow God/Christ to have His way with him/her:

*Haga lo que quisiere de nostras.*⁴⁹

Teresa wishes that her audience function in a context of surrender. And to God/Christ Teresa cries out in verse,

*¡Haz de mi lo que quisieres!*⁵⁰

Having taken the stance of allurement, the soul pines away waiting for her Divine Lover to make His seductive advances. Sometimes, Teresa notes, He will entice her with a word heard or remembered, then snatch her into rapture.⁵¹ Or, He might in a vision tempt her with the beauty of His risen glory.⁵² This vision might be rather intimate indeed. As Teresa recalls,

*Se me representó toda esta Humanidad sacratísima.*⁵³

God/Christ may initiate the mystical love-play, but the soul in her own right orchestrates, at least, the setting for rapture to arise. And thus Teresa treats the soul in an analogous fashion with the manner her contemporaries envisioned women: as the orchestrators of their own seduction.

⁴⁸ *Camino* 32:11.

⁴⁹ "Let Him make of us whatever He wishes." *Moradas* 4:2.

⁵⁰ "Do with me what You will!" *Exclamaciones* 17:6.

⁵¹ *Moradas* 6:4:3.

⁵² *Vida* 29:2.

⁵³ "Every inch of the sacred Humanity was represented to me [in a vision]." *Vida* 28:3. Italics are mine. The Spanish carries the connotation of nakedness: i.e., Teresa insists that Jesus appeared *totally* naked to her in a vision.

H. Abduction in Rapture

God is a Thug!⁵⁴

Teresa will speak of God, in respect to rapture, in such a way as to hint of passion and pathology on God's part.⁵⁵ Specifically during rapture, Teresa insists that God as *Ravisseur* responds to the *flirtation of humility* with a *divine obsession* and brute force, like a Giant dealing with the soul.⁵⁶ Thus, the mystic is often terrified by the way God seemingly *manhandles* him/her.⁵⁷ Without explicit prior consent, though anticipating such consent and eventually winning over the mystic's approval, and with violence and irresistibility, the mystic experiences an abduction of sorts. This mystical posture is not unique in the Western Christian mystical tradition. For example Mechtild of Magdeburg (1207 - 1282) writes of the same dynamic between herself and her Divine Lover:

Ah dearest Love, for how long/Hast Thou lain in wait for me!/What, o what can I do?/I am hunted, captured, bound,/Wounded so terribly/That never can I be healed...⁵⁸

For Teresa, the body senses itself as being captured.⁵⁹ With the

⁵⁴ Zaehner, *Our Savage God*, 217.

⁵⁵ Experiencing God as pathological is not uncommon to the mystic. See for example Donald Blais, "Eutrapelia: The Dynamics of Divine and Human Playfulness" (M.A. thesis, University of St. Michael's College, 1993), 138-143, 146.

⁵⁶ *Moradas* 6:5:2.

⁵⁷ *Vida* 20:4; 20:7; 24:5.

⁵⁸ Mechtild of Magdeburg, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead*, trans. Lucy Menzies, Cited in *Medieval Women's Visionary Literature*, ed. Elizabeth Alvilda Petroff (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 214.

⁵⁹ ...y como le toma se queda siempre.: "And it always remains how it is captured." *Vida* 20:3.

whole person trying to resist, the body finds itself bound.⁶⁰ It is unable to speak, as if gagged.⁶¹ Meanwhile, the soul is captured⁶² or kidnapped,⁶³ and forcibly taken away⁶⁴ or carried off.⁶⁵ The whole of the rapture is referred to as a kidnapping or abduction/*rapto*: i.e. rapine.⁶⁶ According to Teresa's culture, Teresa's way of expressing rapture might suggest the notion of rape, since such an understanding of rape was broader than our own, treating abduction as an act of violation, and not limiting violation specifically to actions involving sexual organs.⁶⁷ Nor is Teresa alone in choosing to explain the beginning of rapture as an abduction, in the fashion of the medieval Sufi. Francisco De Osuna (d. 1540), on whom Teresa relies for some of her spiritual doctrine, uses similar terminology which alludes to an abduction:

⁶⁰ Here Teresa, referring to the body, uses the adjective, *atado*, bundled or inhibited. *Vida* 20:20.

⁶¹ *Moradas* 6:4:13.

⁶² *Vida* 20:18. Here Teresa uses the verb *tomar*.

⁶³ Teresa uses the verb, *robar*, to kidnap. *Moradas* 6:4:9.

⁶⁴ Teresa uses the verb, *llevar*, to carry [away]. *Vida* 20:4.

⁶⁵ *Moradas* 6:4:13. Here Teresa favors the verb *arrebatar*.

⁶⁶ *Moradas* 6:4:pref. Geoffrey Parrinder wishes that we not underestimate the etymological link between the words rape and rapture in English. Geoffrey Parrinder, *Mysticism in the World's Religions* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1995), 170. In Spanish *rapto* (kidnapping/abduction) and *arrobamiento* (rapture) are derived from the same Latin root, *rapio* (to seize).

⁶⁷ The medieval and Renaissance concept of rape allowed for the interchangeability of the terms for violent rape, consenting or non-consenting statutory rape and the abduction of adults or minors. See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex and Christian Society*, 532-533. Yet one might argue, the insane of her day could have been dealt with in a similar fashion: binding and transporting, and thus it is reading too much into Teresa to infer sexual overtones in her choice of descriptives. Teresa does note that the proper treatment of the insane involved confining them against their wills, but she does not mention as requisite a transportation. Instead, she prescribes a whipping to follow restraining them. *Fundaciones* 7:7.

of being seized, being robbed of the senses, and secretly transported.⁶⁸ In a general fashion, Juan De Avila (1500 - 1569) refers to God's love as "bondage," as a "bond of salvation" which not only ties us to God, but may prevent us from parting.⁶⁹ Peter of Alcantara confessed to the violence of his own raptures, their irresistibility and his state of bodily frozenness.⁷⁰

But there is a notable irony present. However terrifying the abduction is to the psyche and emotions, and however brutal to the body, the soul treats this -- at least in the aftermath -- as a liberation.⁷¹ Having been enraptured, the soul finds the divine captivity glorious and now estimates the frailty of human existence as enduring in chains and imprisonment:

*Vese encadenada y presa.*⁷²

And again,

*Da un gran deseo...desatado de esta cárcel...*⁷³

God becomes the Grand Liberator, the Nobel *Caballero* of the books of chivalry freeing the fair damsel in distress, not the rogue of the picaresque novels or the unscrupulous caballero who takes

⁶⁸ Francisco De Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, trans. A Benedictine of Stanbrook (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1931), 326.

⁶⁹ Juan De Avila, "Letter to a Religious," In E. Allison Peers, *Spanish Mysticism* (London: Methuen & Co., 1924), 89.

⁷⁰ G. VV., Franciscan Fryar, *A Briefe Relation of the Life and Death of the Blessed Father, Fr. Peter De Alcantara*, Franciscan Fryar, *A Golden Treatise of Mentall Praier by Fr. Peter De Alcantara*, trans. G. VV. (Bruxelles: by the Widowe of Hvbert Antone, 1632), chapter 6.

⁷¹ *Vida* 21:6. Teresa actually takes advantage of the full meaning of *libertad*.

⁷² "It sees herself enchained and captured." *Vida* 21:6; and *Vida* 20:25. See also *Exclamaciones* 15:1.

⁷³ "One is given a great desire to be released from this prison." *Camino* 19:11.

liberties. No longer is God violator, although in every subsequent rapture He is still fear-inspiring. But after rapture is experienced, the limitations of the corporate human person are projected even more upon the body. The body which previously may have been deemed *el enemigo*: "the enemy,"⁷⁴ is even more depreciated. The notion of bodily death is no longer foreboding; in many ways it is now welcomed.⁷⁵ The body is not evil: it is, rather, spiritually cumbersome, and thought to hinder the passion of the soul.

Now, to appreciate the full understanding of Teresa's sense of rapture-abduction and the violence involved which contribute to rapture's erotic or passionate quality, I believe it important to consider two characteristics of rapture as outlined by Teresa: (1) irresistibility; and (2) the swiftness of onset. In doing so, I will compare and contrast Teresa's experience and accounts with the understanding of several mystical theologians or commentators.

(1) Irresistibility

Underhill maintains that rapture, if it is authentic, is so *abrupt* and *intense* that it proves *irresistible*:

Such is *Rapture*: a violent and uncontrollable expression of genius for the Absolute, which temporarily disorganizes and may permanently injure the nervous system of the self.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ *Camino* 11:5.

⁷⁵ *Vida* 38:5.

⁷⁶ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Scarborough, ON: Meridian, 1974), 375, 376.

This is the contention also of Elizabeth Teresa Howe:

While the mystic cannot induce ecstasy, neither can he or she resist its onset.⁷⁷

Teresa herself makes the ability to resist God's advances a characteristic of *unión* (union) and *not arrobamiento* (rapture). Concerning union, Teresa writes,

*Que en la unión, como estamos en nuestra tierra, remedio hay...;*⁷⁸

In contrast, regarding rapture Teresa affirms

*Aquí no hay ningún remedio de resistir...*⁷⁹

Teresa goes so far as to question the authenticity of the rapture based upon its irresistibility:

*Porque nosotros no podemos nada, aunque hagamos más por resistir, si es verdadero arrobamiento.*⁸⁰

As if to confirm Teresa, Tanquerey points out,

*Le ravissement s'empare de l'âme avec impétuosité et violence, si bien qu'on ne peut y résister. On dirait un aigle puissant vous emportant sur ses ailes: on ne sait ou l'on va.*⁸¹

(2) Swiftess of Onset

In *Vida* 20:3, Teresa holds that there is a gradualness in the

⁷⁷Elizabeth Teresa Howe, "Donne and the Spanish Mystics on Ecstasy," *Notre Dame English Journal* 13 (Spring 1981): 31.

⁷⁸"That in union, while we are on this earth, there is a remedy..." *Vida* 20:3.

⁷⁹"Here there is no remedy of resistance..." *Vida* 20:3. See also *Vida* 20:4, 20:6, 38:1; *Cuentas* 2:2.

⁸⁰"Because we cannot do anything, though we try to resist, if it is a true rapture." *Fundaciones* 6:1.

⁸¹"Rapture seizes the soul with impetuosity and violence, so well that one is unable to resist. One may say a powerful eagle carries you on its wings: one does not know where one is." Adolphe Tanquerey, *Précis de Théologie Ascétique de Mystique*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Desclée et Cⁱ, 1924), 915.

process of enrapturing. She writes, ...*vase enfriando*, that is, "the vessel [body] cools down [as if, over a period of time];" i.e., the soul gradually leaves the body behind in rapture. And yet, Teresa compares the soul enraptured to a phoenix, known for the rapidness of its ascent.⁸²

Incrementalness in enrapturing also appears to be attested to in *Cuentas* 54 (59):8 (9). But here, one might be able to argue that the onset of the whole of the rapture is taken as slow in comparison with the onset of the whole experience of the similar mystical phenomena known as *transport*.⁸³ Better yet, one might contend that Teresa is not actually treating rapture and transport according to comparative speeds. One might read Teresa as holding a discussion on the swiftness of rapture as to the captivation of the will, and transport as to the captivation of the intellect.⁸⁴ Rapture would be slow in comparison to transport *only* as to the fact that rapture does not separate the mystic as quickly from earthly thoughts and sensations, but does so, as Teresa notes, in intervals: sometimes all the faculties and then only the will.⁸⁵ The speed of onset of rapture is slow in relation to transport, but not to simple ecstasies,⁸⁶ in two senses: (1) that during

⁸² *Vida* 20:25.

⁸³ In *Vida* 24:5 transport and rapture are equated. In *Moradas* 6:5:1, transports are called raptures, but distinguished it appears, at first, by a relative swiftness.

⁸⁴ Teresa speaks of transport as due to an enlightenment of the intellect. *Cuentas* 54 (59): 8 (9).

⁸⁵ *Vida* 20:19.

⁸⁶ *Moradas* 6:4:13-14

enrapturing the outward person *dies* -- *is suppressed* -- more slowly than transport, and yet the rapture takes over the person suddenly, unexpectedly and forcefully as to the *capturing* of the will;⁸⁷ (2) that according to Teresa's experience, transport is more effective -- *speedier* -- in the process of spiritual conversion, i.e., *dying to the world or the outer man*, than is rapture. Hence, in *Moradas* 6:5:1 Teresa goes so far as to treat flight of the spirit, which is known for its velocity (*una velocidad*), as a type of rapture:

*Otra manera de arrobamientos hay o vuela del espíritu le llamo yo....,*⁸⁸

This statement seems to confirm the rapidity of the onset of rapture. Both Underhill⁸⁹ and Poulain insist that rapture is abrupt, forceful and swift: *subite et violente*.⁹⁰

It should be noted that not all commentators are in agreement with me. Petersson,⁹¹ Dicken,⁹² and D'Souza,⁹³ for example, insist that rapture is a measured process of entrancing.

⁸⁷ See also *Cuentas* 54:7/*Testimonies* 59:7.

⁸⁸ "There is another type of rapture which I call flight of the spirit..."

⁸⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, 359.

⁹⁰ "sudden and violent." Auguste Poulain, *Des Grâces D'Oraison Traité De Théologie Mystique*, 11th ed. (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1931), 254.

⁹¹ Robert T. Petersson, *The Art of Ecstasy: Teresa, Bernini, and Crashaw* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 38.

⁹² E.W. Trueman Dicken, *The Crucible of Love: A Study of the Mysticism of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 397.

⁹³ Gregory D'Souza, OCD, *Teresian Mysticism and Yoga* (Carmelhill, Mangalore, India: By the author, 1981), 137-139.

I. - J. The Peak of Eros in Rapture

Saevus deus: The savage, raving, raging, beserk God.⁹⁴

Deidre Green, a feminist theologian, maintains that the imagery in Teresa's mystical expressions is "highly sensual." She argues that while these descriptions are often erotic, they are "by no means confined to it."⁹⁵ Still, one cannot deny that a large part of Teresa's imagery specifically gravitates around the erotic, as has been seen so far. On the other hand, Tessa Bielecki takes another approach. She makes a clear distinction between "eros"⁹⁶ and "eroticism,"⁹⁷ applying the former to Teresa's mysticism, separating Teresa's descriptions from any sense of inordinacy. Teresa, Bielecki maintains, "channeled this raw undifferentiated energy...into [her] love of God, [her] prayer, [her] mystical life."⁹⁸ Green's and Bielecki's positive understandings of Teresa's sensuality/eros depart from many of Teresa's critics who see Teresa's raptures as nothing but symptoms of hysteria. William Boothby Selbie, for example, maintains that ecstatic experiences which have erotic overtones are essentially "dangerous" and "generally speaking, psychopathic."⁹⁹ Whether or not Teresa was

⁹⁴ Zaehner, *Our Savage God*, 220.

⁹⁵ Diedre Green, *Gold in the Crucible: Teresa of Avila and the Western Mystical Tradition* (Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1989), 46.

⁹⁶ the "great-souled desire for oneness;" Tessa Bielecki, OCD, *Holy Daring: An Outrageous Gift to Modern Spirituality from Saint Teresa, the Grand Wild Woman of Avila* (Rockport, MA: Element, 1994), 48.

⁹⁷ "a preoccupation with genitality;" Bielecki, *Holy Daring*, 48.

⁹⁸ Bielecki, *Holy Daring*, 49.

⁹⁹ William Boothby Selbie, *The Psychology of Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 261.

hysterical during her raptures,¹⁰⁰ it is still valid to consider what Teresa was attempting to describe. There is more to Teresa's raptures than the *mechanics*; there are the pervasive *matters of the heart*. It appears that Teresa is depicting -- now here, now there, albeit not systematically¹⁰¹ -- the dynamics of love-play with the transcendent as having transpired in her mystical vocation. A love-sickness is caused by God in the core of the beloved's soul. The soul counters by fostering humility. In turn, this growing humility entices God/Christ to approach the soul more directly and ardently. God/Christ as Lover seduces, then abducts and finally ravishes the mystic. Again the soul pines away in an ever-increasing love-sickness. And the play continues for a time in this cyclical pattern.

The high point of Teresa of Avila's raptures truly bears the marks of eros/the erotic. Here the mystic is God's/Christ's *amadore*, "lover."¹⁰² The role of the mystic is established by the love-play: to conquer the "Victor" (*el vencedor*) through a willingness to "surrender" (*dándose*).¹⁰³ With a forcefulness on the part of the Divine/Divine-Human Lover, and of what might be

¹⁰⁰ This will be taken up in the section devoted to the psychology of rapture.

¹⁰¹ Teresa seems to have lived the significance of her raptures quite naturally, and without much reflection as to meanings.

¹⁰² *Meditaciones* 3:7.

¹⁰³ *Exclamaciones* 16:3.

considered a vaginal displacement,¹⁰⁴ the Lover may enter into the heart.¹⁰⁵ Luis de León, a professor of St. John of the Cross, argued that the peak of enrapturing could rightly be called *ayuntamiento*, that is, "copulation"¹⁰⁶ or as Alexander Parker also translates this word, "[sexual] uniting."¹⁰⁷ Sandra Fischer maintains that Teresa's reference to the fourth water of contemplation (in *Vida* 18:9) is an *ejaculatory* metaphor, seeing that there is a "spontaneous water emanating in a great stream from God."¹⁰⁸ As Teresa herself notes, the garden of the soul is near-flooded and overwhelmed by the water flowing directly from God in a heavenly shower. This would not be inconsistent with the experience of other female mystics. For example, Mechtild of Magdeburg believes herself to have a spiritual "intercourse" with God in which "He gives Himself to her and she to Him."¹⁰⁹

Allied to these notions are the theological speculations of the feminist, Dorothy Donnelly also regarding divine erotism. I include them here because of their implications to an understanding

¹⁰⁴ Literally in women, archetypically in men. See Elizabeth Robertson, "The Corporeality of Female Sanctity in *The Life of Saint Margaret*," *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Tímea Szell (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 282.

¹⁰⁵ "Ayes Del Destierro," stanza 10.

¹⁰⁶ Luis de León, *Los nombres de Cristo, Obras Completas Castellanas*, vol. 1, ed. Félix García (Madrid, 1957), 652.

¹⁰⁷ Alexander A. Parker, *The Philosophy of Love in Spanish Literature: 1480 - 1680*, ed. Terence O'Reilly (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), 87.

¹⁰⁸ Sandra K. Fischer, "Crashaw, Ste. Teresa, and the Icon of Mystical Ravishment," *Journal of Evolutionary Psychology* 4 (August 1983): 185.

¹⁰⁹ Mechtild of Magdeburg, "Flowing Light," 220.

of the divine nature as engaged by Teresa in mystical phenomena. Donnelly suggests that as we envision God as Love, we must become aware of God as having "organs of relationship," i.e. *faculties* (if we are to anthropomorphize), as He as the "dynamic Beloved" cannot be non-sexual. For Donnelly, "God makes love" which "can and often does involve bodily rapture,...and intercourse with divine love." Again, Donnelly reminds her audience,

God, then, not only is love; God makes love.¹¹⁰

Another feminist, Grace Jantzen, concerns herself with the reciprocal sexuality of female Christian mystics, sexuality being treated as a necessary element in female mystics' engagement of the sexualized Transcendental. She points out that the great women mystics of the European Middle Ages who used erotic language (and this applies to Teresa in the Renaissance) should not be "lumped together with male writers like Bernard" of Clairvaux. He, while employing highly erotic phrases, according to Jantzen's assessment, "used the erotic as an allegory hedged about with warnings." Supposedly such spiritual authors as Bernard de-eroticized the erotic through "intellectualising" or "climbing into the head." Rather, women mystics have used language which was "highly charged," describing a

passionate encounter between Christ and the writer. The sexuality is explicit, and there is no warning that it should not be taken literally.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Dorothy H. Donnelly, "The Sexual Mystic: Embodied Spirituality," *The Feminist Mystic: And Other Essays on Women and Spirituality*, ed. Mary E. Giles (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1982), 132, 128,

¹¹¹ Grace M. Jantzen, *Power, Gender and Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 133.

The Byzantine Liturgy also shares in this frame of mind. There are allusions made to Christ's having contemplative-intercourse with Teresa, she freely cooperating in the mystic event. For example,

In you His sweet arrows have penetrated, producing for
you ineffable rapture.¹¹²

And of God emitting, seminally, His life and mercy throughout her depths, the Liturgy in euphonism says,

The Floods of His knowledge overwhelmed you, O Teresa,
and caused the rivers of Paradise to flow into your
garden.¹¹³

Was Teresa, in her raptures, for example, not of this same tradition, of engaging the God Who is madly in erotic love?

Carole Slade argues that Teresa at times had to avoid "straightforward presentation." Rather, Teresa needed to employ "carefully crafted" explanations so that her examiners would consider her experiences "divine rather than demonical."¹¹⁴ Regarding the most intimate aspect of rapture, the ravishment, Teresa is circumspect in her description, but the erotic overtones are still evident. She distances herself from more explicit language, such as that found in de Leon.¹¹⁵ Teresa prefers the more neutral "one-ing" with God,¹¹⁶ or referring to herself as

¹¹² "Feast of Venerable Mother Teresa," *Festal Menaion*, comp. and trans. Sisters of St. Basil the Great (Uniontown, PA: Sisters of St. Basil the Great, 19??), 513.

¹¹³ "Feast of Venerable Mother Teresa," 517.

¹¹⁴ Carole Slade, *St. Teresa of Avila: Author of A Heroic Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 4.

¹¹⁵ Which contributed to his censoring by the Inquisition.

¹¹⁶ *Moradas* 7:1:5; *Fundaciones* 5:13.

being "joined" with God.¹¹⁷ The meaning is clearer in her poetry, more frank in expression as the audience was restricted. Regarding the Lover *seminally* discharging His grace and life within her, and Teresa being a worthy recipient, Teresa writes,

*Yo toda me entregué y di,
Y de tal suerte he trocado.*¹¹⁸

And,

*Da todo.*¹¹⁹

During the ravishment, the heart falters and the hands clench stiff.¹²⁰ The mystic may even groan.¹²¹ The faculties of the soul are suspended by "pleasure" (*el gozo*);¹²² the body can be racked with pain.¹²³ Even the soul may endure much interior pain.¹²⁴ The experience ultimately puts one out of one's senses¹²⁵ and drives one into a state of mad euphoria.¹²⁶ Often there is a penetration of the intellect with an inception of

¹¹⁷ *Moradas* 7:1:6.

¹¹⁸ "[I myself am completely surrendered and given,/And it was such fortune to have exchanged."
"Sobre Aquellas Palabras 'Dilectus Meus Mihi'," refrain.

¹¹⁹ "He gave all." "Oh! Dichosa Tal Zagala," stanza 5.

¹²⁰ *Vida* 20:12.

¹²¹ *Vida* 29:13.

¹²² *Vida* 20:11.

¹²³ *Vida* 38:5.

¹²⁴ *Moradas* 6:11:2.

¹²⁵ *Moradas* 6:4:2.

¹²⁶ See variously, *Vida* 40:7; *Fundaciones* 28:31.

knowledge into the mysteries of God.¹²⁷ There might also be exchanges of flirtation.¹²⁸ Sometimes a rapture can be received with a rather phallic quality as an arrow piercing into the depths of one's being, as in a transverberation.¹²⁹ Enrapturing is consummated in devotion.¹³⁰ The pain of the rapture is sweetly savored.¹³¹ And like the damsel portrayed in some of the knightly books, Teresa had let God have His way with her in everything.¹³² Juan de los Angeles (1536 - 1609) at one point implies, but does not confirm, mystical ravishment. But, he goes one step further than Teresa and suggests that God is a murderer of sorts. God abducts for purposes of love and then does away with the love-object:

Divine Love wounds, makes sick, imprisons and even causes one's powers to fail, and slays.¹³³

Juan De Avila contends that God would "slay" the mystic through His "favours." De Avila maintains that the object of Love's wrath is

¹²⁷ For example, *Moradas* 6:5:8-9.

¹²⁸ *Es un requiebro tan suave que pasa entre el alma y Dios*: "The flirtation between the soul and God is so gentle..." *Vida* 29:13.

¹²⁹ This transverberation is the seal of Teresa's mystical marriage. *Moradas* 6:11:2; also "*Sobre Aquellas Palabras 'Dilectus Meus Mihi'*," stanza 2. For a similar assessment of transverberation as a phallic event, see Parrinder, *Mysticism*, 170.

¹³⁰ *Pues a mi Dios me he entregado*: "Now then to my God I have been committed/devoted." "*Sobre Aquellas Palabras 'Dilectus Meus Mihi'*," stanza 2.

¹³¹ *Camino* 19:9.

¹³² *Vida* 20:22.

¹³³ Juan de los Angeles, *Spiritual Conflict*, Cited in *The Spirit of the Spanish Mystics: An Anthology of Spanish Religious Prose from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century*, trans. Kathleen Pond (London: Burns & Oates, 1958, 114.

the "old man," the fallenness of Adam within us which Love seeks to "destroy."¹³⁴

Sandra Fischer argues that Teresa's mystical ravishment contained dynamics of rape:

Ravishment itself contains a paradoxical meaning which Ste. Teresa capitalizes upon; it is rapture or ecstasy as well as rape, the act of filling with joy as well as seizing and carrying off by force.¹³⁵

I disagree. In dissenting, let me make several distinctions between the dynamics of the ravishment of rapture with that of rape. These distinctions are pertinent. As the psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, writes,

A rape may not be distinguishable physically from a loving encounter, but their psychological effects are worlds apart.¹³⁶

First. In rape the victim is intentionally defiled and psychologically threatened. In rapture, the mystic's consent is anticipated by an Omniscient God and the result is a strengthening of the personality. Geoffrey Parrinder concurs:

Mystics often speak of raptures, or being rapt, which derives from the same root as raped. But the difference is in the consent and willing abandon to love...¹³⁷

Teresa herself points out that God *no ha de forzar nuestra voluntad*.¹³⁸ That is, God does not respond to our human weakness

¹³⁴ Juan De Avila, "Letter to a Religious," 90.

¹³⁵ Fischer, "Crashaw, Ste. Teresa...", 186.

¹³⁶ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1990), 101.

¹³⁷ Parrinder, *Mysticism*, 170.

¹³⁸ "[He] does not force/compel our will." *Camino* 28:12.

and fears, but to our true inner desire -- in this instance, a desire to be mystically ravished -- even if we are not so aware at our surface being of what we wish at our deeper being.¹³⁹ Second. In and after rape the victim interprets the assault as a violation of person. In and after rapture the mystic interprets the assault as a grace. Why? Helen Hazen points out that rape is largely a perception: not only if the violence is not welcomed, but that the sexual attack is viewed as a crime more heinous than murder, will a woman interpret the encounter in the most negative of terms:

Rape can be a fate worse than death only if a raped female considers herself better dead than alive after being partner to a sexual act against her will.¹⁴⁰

According to Teresa a negative interpretation is far from the mystic's mind. As Teresa writes in reference to rapture,

...todo lo que El da es para nuestro bien.¹⁴¹

Rapture, according to Teresa's experience and interpretation, was the coming together of the power and passion of God in a religious experience that was sensed as violent and erotic, and at the same time redemptive.¹⁴²

I have preferred the term *ravishment* to *rape* to explain some

¹³⁹ *Yo dispongo las cosas conforme a loque sé de tu voluntad y no conforme a tu sensualidad y flaqueza.* That is, "I dispose things in order to conform with your will and not to conform to your sensuality and frailty." *Cuentas* 11.

¹⁴⁰ Helen Hazen, *Endless Rapture: Rape, Romance, and the Female Imagination* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1983), 74.

¹⁴¹ "...all that He gives is for our own good." *Camino* 19:9.

¹⁴² This does not infer that Teresa was able to name or own all of her experience.

of the dynamics of these raptures. While there is a formidable intrusion in rapture by the divine which renders the victim perilously vulnerable, torn between fear and anticipation, the angelic and the earthy, rapture is devoid of the vulgarity and abuse found in human rape. There is an element of romance on a supernatural level that is concurrently incarnational, bringing energies from both the soul and the body into encounter with the divine. The love-play of Teresian rapture allows for the fear of a hypothetical brutality¹⁴³ which is *tamed* by her surrender into Divine/Christic Love, allowing for Teresa to desire all the more her Lover. As Hazen analyses the attraction of rape-fantasy for some women -- and which may be applied here as well,

Once again, one seeks or imagines what is painful so that the pleasure of overcoming it may be greater. ...If an average woman imagines the pain of being raped, she will extend it to wipe out the abuse by its transformation into love...¹⁴⁴

Again, it is important to consider that Teresa's rapturous violence was not simply *done* to her. The mystic's love also exercises violence upon the mystic, afflicts the mystic, as it cooperates in the mad *going out of self* or being raised up. As Bataille notes, rapture is a consummate state of "ambiguity":

[Teresa] lost her footing but all she did was to live more violently, so violently that she could say she was on the threshold of dying, but such a death as tried her to the utmost though it did not make her cease to live.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ *Vida* 20:4.

¹⁴⁴ Hazen, *Endless Rapture*, 99.

¹⁴⁵ Bataille, *Erotism*, 240.

Raptures, in the end, served as part of Teresa's rich love story with God/Christ that was anything but static, dispassionate or heady. Teresa's Lover was not a god of the Stoics, nor the god of many a practical Christian.

God is a Jealous God (Ex 34:14)¹⁴⁶ as revelation attests, and the lives of the saints have demonstrated. Such divine jealousy demands total surrender, and consequently God may forcefully pursue His beloved. Yet, God also resists¹⁴⁷ exclusion on the part of the beloved by a graced offense played against ego-entrenchments in the mystic. Love desires to be loved, not to have its displays of love frustrated. It recognizes and delights, as said earlier, in the allure of humility¹⁴⁸ and addresses the soul in a paradoxical realized-fantasy *analogous* in aspects to rape -- with all the risk of injury and violation via encountering a more naked God. It is a lived-fantasy with all the interplay of conquering and being conquered, love-predator and love-prey arising from both parties. Rapture is a calculated struggle on the side of the Godhead, in part, to further instill longing/yearning in the soul. As Georges Bataille points out,

Danger has a paralyzing [debilitating] effect, but if it is a mild danger it can excite desire. We can only reach a state of ecstasy when we are conscious of death or

¹⁴⁶ Teresa acknowledges this divine jealousy when she states that God imprisons the soul in religious life by means of His Love. *A La Gala Gala De La Religion*.

¹⁴⁷ Without offending free will.

¹⁴⁸ *Camino* (Codice de el Escorial) 24:2.

annihilation, even if remotely.¹⁴⁹

More blunt, Bataille insists on the necessity of a risk or sense of proximate violation in order to erotically climax, to bring human erotism beyond itself into a state or condition of transcendence:

If the element of violation, violence even, which gives it its destructive character is withdrawn, this erotic activity reaches its climax far less easily.¹⁵⁰

Teresian raptures rely heavily, as we have seen, upon the interplay of erotic and agapic aspects of love, violence and a proximate risk of destruction. They are, in the end, *little deaths*, little sacrifices -- ambiguous phenomena in that they exalt the formative dynamics of the mystic's personality and his/her relationship with God, but also damage the encrustations of personality and obstacles to spiritual relationship. The beloved's barriers to a more complete/authentic selfhood and participation in God are successively dismantled piece by piece through the spiritualization and exaltation of his/her erotism. According to Julia Kristeva, the Christian notion of religious sacrifice involves the erotic; Christianity has "magnified the victimized aspect of that offering," the "death of the old man."¹⁵¹ Such are Teresian raptures: erotic sacrifices, divine outpourings with the effect of chippings-away at the stronghold of the ego, both

¹⁴⁹ Georges Bataille, *Erotism, Death and Sensuality*, trans. Mary Dalwood (San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 1986), 267.

¹⁵⁰ Note, that Bataille maintains that there are three principal forms of eroticism: "physical" (genital), "emotional" (passion through philosophy) and "religious" (mysticism). Bataille, *Erotism* 15, 18.

¹⁵¹ Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Rondiez (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989), 131, 134.

psychologically and morally. Hence, Bataille also writes,

The whole business of eroticism is to destroy the self-contained character of the participators as they are in their normal lives.¹⁵²

In Teresian rapture, the dignity of the mystic is ultimately affirmed and blessed through ravishment with all its erotic components: force, resistance and risk. They are acts of divine artistry in which the personality is prepared for a greater deconstruction-reconstruction of itself through further regressive and regenerative activity. As Jantzen maintains of women's mystical experiences,

It is precisely through actual eroticism that lessons of God are to be learned.¹⁵³

We can say, therefore, that the Divine Madness is not without method, and there is obvious method to His mystically instilled madness.

Finally, while Teresa is constantly alluding to God/Christ as her "Spouse" (*Esposo*) there is the occasional reference to God/Christ as Father or Brother.¹⁵⁴ Teresa's mysticism was explicitly spousal, but an incestuous-like aspect was an evident undercurrent, whether or not she was conscious of it. As such this incestuous-likeness gave her ravishment another perspective, namely, a *homology* with her Ravisher. Thus, later, she was able to record the words of Christ spoken to her,

¹⁵² Bataille, *Erotism*, 17.

¹⁵³ Jantzen, *Power, Gender*, 134.

¹⁵⁴ e.g. *Exclamaciones* 7:1; 14:2.

*Mi honora es tuya y la tuya mía.*¹⁵⁵

This is as if to say that Teresa eventuated identification with Christ/the Godhead Who had come to her, overpowered her, seized her, overwhelmed her, expanded her and ultimately *transmediated* her.¹⁵⁶ Teresa insists that transpiring during rapture is a real and *transformamiento del alma del todo en Dios*: "total transformation of the soul into God."¹⁵⁷ *Homologism* is achieved through -- and in some way reflects -- the excessive love of the Persons of the Trinity, so much so that Three are One Will.¹⁵⁸ Spiritual progress, for Teresa, is treated in part as an exchange of wills with Christ.¹⁵⁹ It seems that transforming union -- which raptures help to prepare for -- requires the whole person with all of his/her relational aspects to make an identification with Christ. On the other hand, in human incest, the power-plays enhance disparity between those involved.

K. Dominance of a Divine Male-Principle

Teresa relates to God as to a Divine Male-Principle. Regardless of the occasional female metaphor applied to Christ, God/Christ is "Father," "Brother" and most often "Husband" or "His

¹⁵⁵ "My honor is yours and yours is Mine." *Cuentas* 25 (31).

¹⁵⁶ In the sense of trans (across) + mediate (verb form of the noun medium): to pass from one medium to another.

¹⁵⁷ *Vida* 20:18.

¹⁵⁸ *Cuentas* 60 (29).

¹⁵⁹ *Cuentas* 16 (15) & 20 (19). See also *Vida* 20:22.

Majesty."¹⁶⁰ And similar to the male-figures of the day, God is in absolute control.¹⁶¹ God/Christ operates from a position of ultimate authority and power:

*Todo lo mando, todo lo puede.*¹⁶²

Again,

*Poderoso es su Majestad para todo lo que quisiere hacer.*¹⁶³

Todo poderoso is His Name.¹⁶⁴

Such power and authority qualifies God's relationship with Teresa. God is addressed variously as *Señor* ("Lord"), *Emperador* ("Emperor") and *Rey* ("King").¹⁶⁵ He is also treated as a lord of an estate or manor.¹⁶⁶ In respect to God, Teresa is a "peasant girl" (*una labradorcilla*),¹⁶⁷ a "vassal" (*una vasalla*),¹⁶⁸ a "slave" (*una esclava*¹⁶⁹ or *una sierva*)¹⁷⁰ nay a "miserable slave"

¹⁶⁰ *Su Majestad*. e.g., *Vida* 19:15.

¹⁶¹ For example, Teresa notes that marriage of her day required that the woman be subject (*sujeta*) to her husband. *Fundaciones* 22:5.

¹⁶² "All is commanded by Him, all is done by Him." *Camino* 22:7.

¹⁶³ "His Majesty is all-powerful that He [does] whatever He wishes to do." *Moradas* 6:11:1.

¹⁶⁴ "Almighty." *Camino* 32:11.

¹⁶⁵ *Camino* 22:1.

¹⁶⁶ *Camino* 34:5.

¹⁶⁷ *Meditaciones* 3:9.

¹⁶⁸ *Moradas* 3:1:6.

¹⁶⁹ Even during the seventh Mansion of espousals. *Moradas* 7:4:8.

¹⁷⁰ *Vida* 19:7.

(una esclava miserable).¹⁷¹

Teresa -- either anticipating God's reaction to her based on cultural influences or co-opting cultural references to explain God's intensity and dominance in His varied dealing with her or a bit of both -- translates this theology in her experience and description of rapture. Teresa is adamant that there is no way to resist rapture.¹⁷² In a sense she feels subjugated,¹⁷³ maybe even *controlled*.¹⁷⁴ Teresa teaches that the mystic is totally in the power of God, Who does not intend any escape from His grasp until He is pleased to let go.¹⁷⁵ Even God, as a forceable embrace, raises Teresa up seemingly against her will; she fails at her attempt to thwart the rapture. The beginning of the enrapturing devolves into *una pelea grande*: "one great scuffle."¹⁷⁶

Rape is often argued as a crime not so much of passion, but of raw power expressing itself in a sexual context. Rapture, though paralleling, differs significantly. Yes, God in Teresa's mind seemingly manipulates and dominates the mystic, but it is for the mystic's well-being, not for the pleasure derived in suppression (or worse, extinction). First. The power of God is not relational so much as essential. Second. The power employed by God is to

¹⁷¹ *Vida* 29:9.

¹⁷² e.g., *Fundaciones* 6:1; *Epistolario*, 174; *Vida* 20:6.

¹⁷³ *Vida* 25:5.

¹⁷⁴ Teresa writes of being *teniéndola así un poco*: "controlled for a little while." *Vida* 20:19.

¹⁷⁵ *Vida* 25:5.

¹⁷⁶ *Vida* 20:6.

achieve a transformation/accommodation of the soul so that transformative union may be achieved. The soul (and to some degree, the body) must not only exchange wills (inclinations) via union and empathy, but in some way substantially transmute. This power, then, will result in an identification with God.¹⁷⁷ If anything it is a self-exploitation in Love on the part of God,¹⁷⁸ and not the exploitation of the mystic through evil. In rapture there is no violence for the sake of violence, even if the mystic might not be so sure of this in his/her initial experience of fear.

L. Marital Laws of God

Teresa's experience of rapture seems to fit more into a Jewish marital scheme than into a gentile Euro-centric engagement-marriage arrangement. While rapture transpires during the betrothal stage of the mystic's vocation,¹⁷⁹ Teresa does not hesitate to employ the title *Esposo* for God/Christ.¹⁸⁰ This spousal notion reflects more of a classical Jewish understanding of betrothal, even though Teresa compares mystical betrothal to Spanish engagements.¹⁸¹ But, the experience of rapture is a departure. As noted above, rapture involves a true exchange of being, however brief and temporary. It resembles more of a marital act than a mere kiss or embrace between

¹⁷⁷ *Moradas* 7:2:4 & 5.

¹⁷⁸ As will be seen when discussing the accommodation on the part of God.

¹⁷⁹ *Moradas* 6:4:2; 6:4:9.

¹⁸⁰ e.g., *Moradas* 6:5:11; *Camino* 13:3.

¹⁸¹ *Moradas* 5:4:4.

fianced, even though in both instances there is an exchange of gifts.¹⁸² Why, then, does rapture transpire before transforming union?

There are two levels to transforming union. There is the permanent state of conformity, and the coming together in various mystical acts of intimacy. Raptures are also acts of intimacy, but which occur, for the most part, before transforming union so as to facilitate the permanent state of conformity. The disparity of natures between the parties necessitates premarital conjunctions. Such conjunctions are not experimental in nature or due to a lack of commitment by the involved parties. Rather, they are formative. According to Teresa, God is fixed in desiring that spiritual marriage transpire,¹⁸³ but the human personality must be accommodated to God, and for the most part in a gradual fashion.

M. - O. The Marks of Rapture

Teresa wishes that her audience be aware of the pain involved in rapture. Like Bataille,¹⁸⁴ Teresa calls the whole affair *tormento*: "torture" as to the pain experienced in both soul and body.¹⁸⁵ For example, the *grip* which God/Christ has on the soul is perceived as constrictive and hurtful,

¹⁸² *Moradas* 5:4:4.

¹⁸³ *Moradas* 6:5:11.

¹⁸⁴ Bataille, *L'Expérience Intérieure*, 84, 103. Bataille uses the word *supplice*, "torture," to explain ecstasy.

¹⁸⁵ *Vida* 20:13.

!Como apretáis a vuestros amadores!¹⁸⁶

The *after-shocks* of the rapture manifest in a sensation of disruption of ligature. Teresa's description calls up images of Medieval and Renaissance torture when she states that the body is as if *han descoyuntado*: "disjointed."¹⁸⁷ This was also the experience of Angela of Foligno:

I felt my joints become dislocated.¹⁸⁸

And again,

I hear the bones cracking when they are thus disjointed.¹⁸⁹

Even so, Teresa notes that the body is often made healthier by the ordeal.¹⁹⁰

The mystical cautery of "great suffering"/*tan grande el dolor*¹⁹¹ interior and exterior and which sealed her spiritual marriage, occurred for Teresa in the context of a rapture. Serving to cure her of her fears, attachments and limitations¹⁹² like the medicinal uses of imposing hot pokers, Teresa was cauterized, according to her account. An angel with *un dardo de oro largo* -- "a large golden shaft" -- on which the tip had a small fire was

¹⁸⁶ "How you squeeze Your lovers so tightly [as to cause pain]:" *Moradas* 6:11:6.

¹⁸⁷ *Vida* 20:12.

¹⁸⁸ Bl. Angela of Foligno, *The Memorial, Complete Works of Angela of Foligno*, trans. Paul Lachance, OFM (New York, NY: Paulist, 1993), 142.

¹⁸⁹ Bl. Angela of Foligno, *The Memorial*, 158.

¹⁹⁰ *Vida* 20:21.

¹⁹¹ *Vida* 29:13.

¹⁹² As will be seen when discussing the spiritual and psychological growth coming through rapture.

meter por el corazón algunas veces -- "put into the heart several times."¹⁹³ Note, though, it is Divine Love that cures her, for the account is reminiscent of Cupid and his arrow. With the vaginal displacement to her heart, the cautery also acts in similar fashion with therapeutic coitus, but coitus with the newly-bridegroomed, not a servicing person. Finally, John of the Cross, basing his notions on Teresa, refers to the cauterization as an *assault*;¹⁹⁴ the Sufi Rumi calls ecstasy of any sort an experience of divine "tyranny."¹⁹⁵

P. Rapture as Martyrdom

God certainly kills the things He loves, but the things He loves rejoice to be killed at such a hand.¹⁹⁶

While Teresa does not overtly refer to her raptures as martyrdoms, still Teresa's raptures transpire within a context of a martyr or victim spirituality. Not only were her raptures redemptive for herself, the dying-to-self involved in these raptures must have been believed by Teresa to glorify God/Christ and to extend Christ's kingdom.

There are various indications of a martyr-mentality found in Teresa's writings. First. Teresa noted that she read lives of the

¹⁹³ *Vida* 29:13.

¹⁹⁴ John of the Cross, *Llama de amor viva* 2:9.

¹⁹⁵ Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, "Music," *The Rubāʿiyyāt of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī*, trans. A.J. Arberry (London: Eemery Walker, 1949), stanza 12, 69.

¹⁹⁶ Zaehner, *Our Savage God*, 242.

saints as a child and desired to die like them.¹⁹⁷ Second. Teresa recalls that as a child she felt her desire for martyrdom or eremiticism was frustrated.¹⁹⁸ Third. As a nun, Teresa is taken by Job 2:10 and Job's receiving of evils from God with conformity with God's will.¹⁹⁹ Fourth. Teresa manifests a major concern over loss of souls, and nurtures feelings of inadequacy regarding her ability to rectify the situation.²⁰⁰ Fifth, but not exhaustive. Teresa desires to be *uno gran efecto y mortificación*; translated loosely, "a greatly effective mortification."²⁰¹

I believe it safe to suggest that Teresa's raptures are spoken of in terms of mock²⁰² or quasi-deaths,²⁰³ or as simulating death²⁰⁴ for two among other reasons. Namely, (1) this is how Teresa experienced her raptures, and (2) this is how Teresa thought of/valued her raptures.

Elizabeth Robertson adds nuance to my assessment by her evaluation of medieval accounts of female martyrs accessible to renaissance women. Robertson maintains that such narratives portrayed women as

¹⁹⁷ *Vida* 1:5 (4).

¹⁹⁸ *Vida* 1:6.

¹⁹⁹ *Vida* 5:8.

²⁰⁰ *Vida* 32:6-9.

²⁰¹ *Vida* 39:13.

²⁰² *Vida* 20:3.

²⁰³ *Moradas* 5:5:7-8.

²⁰⁴ *Vida* 20:18.

triumphing over the flesh...by enduring extreme physical torture. She herself [the saint] views physical suffering as the corrective to [sexual] temptations.²⁰⁵

Furthermore, her suffering allows for an "identification" with Christ.²⁰⁶ Again, from both the transcendence of the body and identification with Christ, is the woman saint able to *transfer* "her physical desire to Christ"²⁰⁷ as "a more suitable object."²⁰⁸ Such was the spirituality available to renaissance nuns and beatas. In the case of Teresa of Avila, Teresa's sufferings in general, as well as her raptures in particular, allow Teresa to temporarily break free of the imprisonment/impairment of this life, to further identify with Christ and to foster a greater intensity in her love. God/Christ becomes the only suitable object of a total outpouring of her spiritual affection, however imperfect.

²⁰⁵ Elizabeth Robertson, "Corporeality of Female Sanctity in *The Life of Saint Margaret*," *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. Renate Blumfeld-Kasinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 280.

²⁰⁶ Robertson, "Corporeality," 281.

²⁰⁷ Robertson, "Corporeality," 269.

²⁰⁸ Robertson, "Corporeality," 284.

3. The *Necessity* of Outward Rapture

We have just considered Teresa's appreciation of the erotic and violent aspects of rapture, as to their mystical significance in preparing the mystic for eventual transforming union and as defining/characterizing the mystic's relationship with the Divine/Christic Lover. Now we should ask, "Must the eroticism of rapture have a somatic side? Are the somatic manifestations of rapture necessary or indispensable, or could/should the peak experience in rapture be precipitated without such a dramatic show of somatic participation?" In raising and answering these questions I will examine what a number of mystical theologians and psychologists have said on the matter.

It is suggested by some mystical theologians that the classic Teresian somatic manifestations of rapture are due to some sort of indisposition within the human personality. Furthermore, it is intimated that if such an indisposition was not present, the bodily characteristics -- e.g., paralysis, suspension of the senses, pain or levitation -- would not occur during the divine communication.¹ Fr. Theophilus, for example, puts the onus on the soul as being "incapable of receiving an intense spiritual communication," and thus the communication spills over into the unsuspecting, vulnerable flesh.² Antonio Royo, OP with Jordan Aumann, OP, William McNamara, OCD, Louis Bouyer, and Joseph

¹ e.g., Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Scarborough, ON: Meridian, 1974), 376.

² Fr. Theophilus, ODC, "Mystical Ecstasy According to St. Teresa," *St. Teresa of Avila: Studies in Her Life, Doctrine and Times*, ed. Fr. Thomas, ODS and Fr. Gabriel, ODC (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1963), 145.

Maréchal, SJ hold that the external manifestations of rapture are due to "bodily weakness,"³ "physical weakness,"⁴ "human weakness under the pressure of grace"⁵ or "feeble adaptations"⁶ on the part of the body. Karl Rahner writes that the secondary aspects of ecstasy are

considered a certain weakness in the nature of the mystic, who cannot contain the abundance of God's mystical self-communication.⁷

Gustave Thils concurs, adding that this is a "sign of imperfection" due to impure or weak senses which are unable "to support divine action without failing."⁸ Evelyn Underhill maintains that there is a general indisposition within the mystic -- a "disharmony" -- which causes the mystic to externalize the rapture in such drastic fashion.⁹ David Knowles explains the externals of rapture as due to *spiritual immaturity*.¹⁰

The mystics often look at this issue from other angles.

³ Antonio Royo, OP and Jordan Aumann, OP, *The Theology of Christian Perfection* (Dubuque, IA: Priory Press, 1962), 551.

⁴ William McNamara, OCD, "Psychology and the Christian Mystical Tradition", *Transpersonal Psychologies*, ed. Charles T. Tart (New York, NY: Harper, 1991), 406.

⁵ Louis Bouyer, *Introduction à la vie spirituelle: Précis de théologie ascétique et mystique* (Paris: Desclée & Co, 1960), 299.

⁶ Joseph Maréchal, SJ, *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*, trans. Algar Thorold (Albany, NY: Magi, 1964), 177.

⁷ Karl Rahner, *Visions and Prophecies* (Montreal, QUE: Palm Publishers, 1963), 57.

⁸ *Notons que cette aliénation des sens est encore un signe d'imperfection. Elle provient du fait que le sens ne sont ni assez purs ni assez forts pour supporter l'action divine sans défaillir.* Gustave Thils, *Sainteté Chrétienne: Précis De Théologie Ascétique* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1963), 546.

⁹ Underhill, *Mysticism*, 376.

¹⁰ David Knowles, *The Nature of Mysticism* (New York, NY: Hawthorn Books, 1966), 55.

Teresa, herself, when speaking about another kind of suspension, makes the point that

*el amor obra con tanta fuerza algunas veces, que se enseñorea de manera sobre todas las fuerzas del sujeto natural.*¹¹

Here it seems that the love to which she refers is both the love as a virtue of the soul and love as God. This observation strikes one as applicable to rapture, such that rapture would be seen as Divine Love stunning and dominating the workings of the human person, hence the external manifestations. Such an understanding would appear to be consistent with her erotic notions of being abducted and manhandled, initially against her will, during rapture. These external manifestations would, then, be natural components of rapture. Osuna, with whom Teresa is familiar, maintained that the emotional level of the mystic during rapture and other religious experiences could be exaggerated through the working of God upon the psyche. This would lead to situations where seemingly bizarre "outward gestures" occurred because the emotions were "too powerful to be suppressed." Such a thing is not to be construed as a personality flaw, weakness or even mental disorder.¹² Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*, who might be said to have influenced Teresa through John of the Cross, strikes one as taking a related bent. Aquinas can be interpreted to mean that the disabling of the body is a necessary aspect in the development of

¹¹ "Love sometimes works with such intensity that it lords over all the forces of the natural subject." *Meditaciones* 7:2.

¹² Francisco De Osuna, *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*, trans. A Benedictine of Stanbrook (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1931), 84.

the mono-ideation of the mystic. Aquinas writes,

*Fuit autem necessarium intellectum eius abstrahi a phantasmatibus et sensibilibus perceptione.*¹³

The rapid and even violent depreciation of the body can be seen as facilitating concentration on Divine realities, since not only does this quickly center one on God, but it habituates a transcendent focus. It should be noted that no where does Teresa declare that the outward manifestations of rapture, especially levitations, are due to human frailty.¹⁴ Teresa distinguishes true raptures from false absorptions, which she suggests are due to inherent weaknesses in the personality or constitutional weakness due to excessive mortification.¹⁵ Although, it should be noted that John of the Cross suggests in *Cantico Espiritual* that the body is not always capable of receiving high spiritual communications due to weakness of nature.¹⁶

I am inclined to believe that maybe the theologians might be too quick to dismiss the *shut-down* of the body as little more than a response of moral or psycho-physiological weakness, i.e., swooning.¹⁷ Yet, while Teresa does discuss swooning, and I do not doubt the possibility of the theologians' explanations for the

¹³ "Now it was necessary that the intellect be abstracted from mental images and sense perception." *ST II-II, Q 175, a 5, resp.*

¹⁴ Specifically, in regards to levitation, the onus is put on the power of God over the weakness of the human person. See for example, *Vida* 20:4, 18

¹⁵ *Moradas* 4:3:11.

¹⁶ John of the Cross, *Cantico Espiritual* 19:1.

¹⁷ See again what Teresa has to say in comparing absorptions and raptures. *Fundaciones* 6:4-6.

somatic aspects of rapture, it seems plausible to attempt to explain the event in a more positive light. Namely, the body might be viewed as *shutting down* as the inner senses (behind the physical senses) are passively caught-up and made receptive now to God, with the core life-energy of the person also centered on God/Christ. Thus, the *shut-down* of the body is less an activity of weakness and more of a facilitation of the union.¹⁸ Arbman, for example, holds that "ecstatic absorption" expresses itself in a "continuous restriction...of the psychic field," a "radical inattention" to the world of sense, resulting in an expected *checking* or "suspension" of the body's "normal functions." "There are no exceptions...;" the "inhibition" of the body is a given in Christian mysticism.¹⁹ This suppression of the body would seem feasible until such time as the mystic had developed his/her abilities of uniting with God. The advanced mystic would be one who is able to be enstatically united with God and still in proximate contact with his/her material surroundings, all without compromising the union. Teresian raptures, then, should be viewed as preparatory in nature.²⁰

There are some who look at raptures for their psychological

¹⁸ One may glean from Pike that as rapture "peaks in a monistic interval," the *lack* of all "sensory content" is natural, even necessary, to the mystical encounter. Nelson Pike, *Mystic Union: An Essay in the Phenomenology of Mysticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 160. This is also implied by Harvey Egan, SJ, when he states, "Because of the intensity of absorption in or entrancement with God, the ecstatic person loses consciousness, to a greater or lesser degree, of everything except God." Harvey Egan, SJ, *Christian Mysticism: The Future of a Tradition* (New York, NY: Pueblo, 1984), 306.

¹⁹ Ernst Arbman, *Ecstasy or Religious Trance: In the Experience of Ecstatics and from the Psychological Point of View*, vol 2 (Norstedts: Svenska Bokförlaget, 1968), 185, 184, 186, 187, 189.

²⁰ John of the Cross *Cantico Espiritual*, 13:6.

significance and see them in a psychological progression.²¹ For example, Frohlich deems raptures and ecstasies as preparatory for a radical reorganization of the personality, which she considers is a *death of the self*. Frohlich maintains this reorganization must take place in the life of the mystic for permanent union to occur.²² Without getting heavily into the psycho-somatic dynamics of rapture, I believe one could build on Frohlich's thought and call raptures *little deaths* which begin to chip away at the *status quo* organization of the personality, and thus the whole of the rapturous experience can be rather positive in nature. In this sense the bodily manifestations can be deemed necessary to the rapture, as they encourage and facilitate the future reordering of the personality. Somewhat differing from Frohlich, Michael Washburn argues that ecstasy²³ occurs in the mystic when the dynamic ground of the psyche upsurges into consciousness and begins to unseat the ego's hold over the whole of the psyche.²⁴ Because the ego suffers "violent arrestment,"²⁵ there is an anticipated

²¹ Without being exhaustive, I shall refer to those I consider most representative.

²² Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 308-314.

²³ Washburn makes no distinctions between ecstasy and rapture.

²⁴ This seems to be supported by Lawrence Leshon's position that "boundaries and dividing lines [seem to be] illusory" during altered states of consciousness. Lawrence L. Leshon, "Psychic Phenomena and Mystical Experience", *Psychic Exploration: A Challenge for Science*, ed. John White (New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 575. See also Margaret Donaldson: "The self may, indeed, for a moment cease to be sensed at all in its usual form..." Margaret Donaldson, *Human Minds: An Exploration* (New York, NY: Allen Lane/Penguin, 1993), 233. Egan argues that "ravishing ecstasies and raptures" aid in the *obliteration* of "all sense of self." Egan, *Christian Mysticism*, 94.

²⁵ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 207.

spill-over into the body. If one goes so far as to favor Washburn, these rapturous experiences might be valued as unseating the ego so that the deeper dynamics of the personality may surface.²⁶ Ruth Burrows suggests, like Washburn, that each rapture succeeds in "wrenching the self away from its self."²⁷ Bache takes a similar stance as to that of Washburn, maintaining that the whole of the rapture represents the psychic need of the mystic to *exhaust* "primitive systems" once buried deep within the unconscious by having them *emerge* in "rare" "volcanic ecstasies." Such ecstasies, Bache insists, should be viewed as "progressive movement toward higher states of consciousness."²⁸ With all of this said, hysterical aspects to rapture are not to be ruled out. If raptures have a developmental purpose they will serve to purge human defect, as well as be partially qualified by human defect, yet this does not mean that they primarily originate in pathology.

The psychological positions regarding the bodily manifestations of rapture given above, and similar ones, are not without their critics. Some would maintain that the exterior demonstrations of rapture would represent full-fledged hysteria or other psychotic conversion into somatic indications. For example, Catherine Romano argues that Teresa's raptures represent the

²⁶ In a sense these rapturous occurrences might be viewed as not only regenerative, but having a regressive element: they serve to "disengage the ego from worldly involvements and [continue in the process of] submitting the ego...to the underlying physico-dynamic strata of the psyche." Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 155. *Ego*, 2nd ed., 171.

²⁷ Ruth Burrows, *Fire Upon the Earth: Interior Castle Explored* (Denville, NJ: Dimension, 1981), 99.

²⁸ Christopher M. Bache, "A Reappraisal of Teresa of Avila's Supposed Hysteria," *Journal of Religion and Health* 24 (Winter 1985), 313, 312, 300.

confinement of Teresa's *hysteria* "to moments...with her lover (Christ)."²⁹ Raymond Prince seems to suggest that raptures are pathological, as elements of "personal disorganization and incapacitation" appear to be present. Without critique, Prince defers to James H. Leuba's earlier position that Teresa was psychotic.³⁰ These criticisms have been presented to demonstrate that those theologians and psychologists who acknowledge and accept somatic displays of religious experience are not received in every circle of thought.

4. Some Theological Criteria for Judging the Authenticity of Raptures

Having considered the necessity of the bodily aspects of rapture, it behooves us to reflect on ways in which Teresa assesses the authenticity of the whole of the rapturous event. Following on the heels of Teresa, Diedre Green insists that raptures and ecstasies can be and are to "be scrutinised for the possibility of delusion." Green clarifies the issue by maintaining that the discussion of authenticity is not to gravitate around whether or not the rapture falls into the domain of the parapsychological or falls into the domain of mysticism.³¹ Rather, the issue for Teresa and Green, like Scripture, is to ascertain the fruits (or lack

²⁹ Catherine Romano, "A Psycho-Spiritual History of Teresa of Avila: A Woman's Perspective", *Western Spirituality*, ed. Matthew Fox (Notre Dame, IL: Fides/Claretian, 1979), 292.

³⁰ Raymond H. Prince, "Religious Experience and Psychopathology: Cross-Cultural Perspectives," *Religion and Mental Health*, ed. John F. Schumaker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 289.

³¹ Diedre Green, *Gold in the Crucible: Teresa of Avila and the Western Mystical Tradition* (Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1989), 60, 62.

thereof) of the mystical encounter.³² Put best by Evelyn Underhill, ecstatic-like experiences should be judged for their after-effects, that is, if they "enhance the vitality, the fervor, or the intelligence of [their] subject."³³

Teresa teaches that there are qualities which occur in the soul if mystics are authentically practicing their vocation. Such qualities are expected to increase in the soul regardless of the type of mystical encounter. Not to be exhaustive by any means, I will enumerate what I believe to be ten of Teresa's general criteria for determining authenticity. Without any particular order, they are as follows: an *observable* and *intuited increase* in (1) the love of God;³⁴ (2) the love of neighbor, especially involving self-sacrifice;³⁵ (3) a rootedness in the humanity of Christ, with special reference to and reliance on the Eucharist;³⁶ (4) devotion to Mary;³⁷ (5) spiritual and, to some degree, material poverty;³⁸ (6) humility and its companion, self-knowledge;³⁹ (7)

³² Similarly, Mt 7:16 reminds us of Jesus' concern for the *fruits* of one's faith journey.

³³ Underhill, *Mysticism*, 361, 362.

³⁴ *Camino (Valladolid)* 19:4; *Moradas* 6:11:1.

³⁵ *Camino (Valladolid)* 4:4-5; 6:9; 7:9.

³⁶ *Moradas* 6:7:5-6, 9, 13-15; *Camino (Valladolid)* 3:8; 34:2. On this point Green writes, "Any awareness of Jesus' humanity or of any specific idea or image must necessarily be briefly lost..." Green, *Gold in the Crucible*, 65. See also O'Sousa, *Teresian Mysticism and Yoga*, 170.

³⁷ *Moradas* 6:7:6, 13.

³⁸ *Camino (Valladolid)* 2:7-8.

³⁹ *Camino (Valladolid)* 4:4; 21:10; *Moradas* 6:5:10.

detachment;⁴⁰ (8) a pure conscience;⁴¹ (9) contempt for the illusory ways and things of the world: e.g., honor, power;⁴² and (10) orthodoxy as interpreted by the Church.⁴³ Each of these is to show an increase, now one, now another, as authentic mystical experiences transpire in the life of the mystic.

There are some qualities of which Teresa speaks especially in the context of raptures. One primary concern of Teresa, is that the enraptured soul grow in conformity to the will of God.⁴⁴ There needs be a loss of the sense of self-sufficiency and self-determination on the part of the advancing mystic. Secondly, when raptures or ecstasies are numerous, the mystic is struck with a weariness regarding life and even creation as a whole.⁴⁵ The soul experiences a passing alienation with the material -- a *transfiguration syndrome*. The situation very much resembles that of Peter, who wished to prolong his stay on the mount with Jesus rather than to continue to encounter daily mortality (Mt 17:4). Alienation, here and at the point of conversion, is due, in part, to an inability to integrate and *incarnate* this new found spiritual energy. But such alienation will later transform into an apostolic fervor -- a third quality to consider -- where "Mary and

⁴⁰ *Camino (Valladolid)* 4:4.

⁴¹ *Camino (Valladolid)* 21:10.

⁴² *Camino (Valladolid)* 21:10; 3:7; 12:5.

⁴³ *Camino (Valladolid)* 21:10.

⁴⁴ *Fundaciones* 5:10.

⁴⁵ *Vida* 20:8; 21:6, 7, 12; 38:7

Martha" are joined: the contemplative and the active aspects of the mystical life come together with ease.⁴⁶ What begins to spur this apostolic fervor is a fourth quality, a *deseos tan grandísimos de que se salven las almas*,⁴⁷ which Teresa sees is the outcome of repeated raptures.

Harkening back to her usual message, but now in the context of rapture, Teresa insists that authenticity is intimately bound with an increase in humility, self-knowledge and love.⁴⁸ All in all, without growth in virtue and deeds Teresa questions the authenticity of rapture,⁴⁹ or for that matter, any spiritual event. Such growth must, in some way, express itself as *heroic*.⁵⁰

Commentators on Teresa and/or writers on altered states of consciousness concur with Teresa's view of the after-effects of rapture. Green focuses on a few, of which humility and detachment are key.⁵¹ These are also primary with Egan.⁵² Burrows highlights self-knowledge and humility.⁵³ Abraham H. Maslow

⁴⁶ *Moradas* 7:4:12.

⁴⁷ An "exceeding desire for the salvation of souls". *Cuentas* 54 (59):8 (10).

⁴⁸ *Vida* 20:7; 21:8; 20:28.

⁴⁹ *Y también va creciendo la perfección*: "And, too, perfection crescendos." *Vida* 21:8. See also 20:23. R.C. Zaehner concurs. See *Mysticism: Sacred and Profane; An Inquiry into Some Varieties of Praeternatural Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 105.

⁵⁰ *Vida* 21:5. *Heroic*, as in exceeding the norm of what constitutes *piety*.

⁵¹ Green, *Gold in the Crucible*, 64.

⁵² Egan, *Christian Mysticism*, 306-307.

⁵³ Burrows, *Fire Upon The Earth*, 101.

centers on selflessness and detachment.⁵⁴ Thils adds heroicisism.⁵⁵ Thomás Agosin contends that while self-preoccupation is symptomatic of psychotic episodes, other-involvement is indicative of mystical experience.⁵⁶

5. Some Deficiencies Among Freudian Critics of Rapture and Mysticism

There are several important deficiencies in the Freudian outlook of religion and mysticism in general, and rapture and ecstasy in particular, which I believe prevent an honest discussion of the merits and demerits of rapture as they pertain to Teresa. I do not wish to be exhaustive, since the purpose of this study is not to become side-tracked into the validity or invalidity of Freudianism. For the purpose of contextualization, I will present, as I see it, seven defects within Freudianism in order to show by contrast why the Washburnian transpersonal model better explains the dynamics of Teresian rapture.

(1) Jung maintained that the psychoanalytical approach to assessing religion was biased by a *dogmatic* (practical or theoretical) atheism over an academic agnosticism. Jung reminded his colleagues and adversaries that

Psychology can only approach the subject from the phenomenological angle, for the realities of faith lie

⁵⁴ Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences* (Toronto, ON: Arkana, 1994), viii-ix, 62.

⁵⁵ Gustave Thils, *Sainteté Chrétienne: Précis De Théologie Ascétique* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1963), 546.

⁵⁶ Thomás Agosin, "Psychosis, Dreams, and Mysticism in the Clinical Domain," *The Fires of Desire: Erotic Energies and the Spiritual Quest*, ed. Frederica R. Halligan (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1992), 54, 55.

outside the realm of psychology.⁵⁷

He went on to say that

[Psychology] would not be a science at all if it regarded its temporary limitations as definitive and denied the existence of anything outside them. No science can consider its hypotheses to be the final truth.⁵⁸

As James DiCenso notes, "scientific inquiry cannot be the only path to reality." It is imperative that the academic mind also consider "artistic illusion"/"creative production" which includes those forms of human expression which utilize "terms of meaning and purpose,"⁵⁹ such as religion and theology. For his part Freud, in *Totem and Taboo*, lumps together the phenomena of religion and neurosis.⁶⁰ According to Hans Küng, this *confusion* of religion and neurosis occurs because Freud's atheism "preceded," and was "not grounded in, his psychoanalysis." Küng insists Freud viewed religion "as the universal human obsessional neurosis," and as such was *ideological* or "doctrinaire,"⁶¹ rather than authentically academic or clinical.

On the contrary, Michael Washburn does not ascribe the spiritual dimensions of the human being to God, nor does he deny

⁵⁷ Carl Jung, "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass," *Psychology and Western Religion*, trans. R.F.C. Hull (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 99.

⁵⁸ Jung, "Transformation Symbolism," 143-144.

⁵⁹ James DiCenso, "Religion as Illusion: Reversing the Freudian Hermeneutic," *Journal of Religion* 71 (April 1991), 177, 179.

⁶⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement Between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*, trans. James Strachey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 156-157.

⁶¹ Hans Küng, *Freud and the Problem of God*, 2nd ed., trans. Edward Quinn and Caroline Murphy (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 75, 46, 74, 67.

the existence of God. His concern is centered on the unfolding of the human personality in its efforts to become self-transcendent. Thus Washburn's theories provide a schema available, without interpretation, to the theistic Christian mystic, the non-theistic Buddhist mystic and the person of no particular religious persuasion.

(2) DiCenso takes issue with "reductionism" which often predominates in the Freudian school in respect to mysticism. "Mystical experiences," DiCenso asserts, are "explained away as regressions to more primitive ego organizations."⁶² This reductionism shows itself in the determination of ecstasy/ecstatic-like experiences as no more than *oceanic* regressions. Freud believed these "oceanic feelings" are a means to re-live the experience of a child's ego melding with its mother. This type of regression is pathological, Freud held, for "the boundary lines between ego and outer world become uncertain." The place which "oceanic feelings" have in religion is "to reinstate limitless narcissism." Both "trance and ecstasy" are believed to be "regressions to primordial, deeply buried mental states,"⁶³ demonstrating escapism, or disintegration of personality structures. As Laurence Nixon points out, contemplative states are assessed by Freud to be "forms of oceanic fusion with the mother

⁶² DiCenso, "Religion as Illusion," 172.

⁶³ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, 1957), 8, 12-13, 11, 21, 22.

that is regressive and maladaptive."⁶⁴ Such experiences were reducible by Freud to neurotic expressions of the Oedipal complex:

The beginnings of religion, morals, society and art converge in the Oedipus complex. This is in complete agreement with the psychoanalytic finding that the same complex constitutes the nucleus of all neuroses, so far as our present knowledge goes.⁶⁵

Commenting on Freud, Küng maintains:

Religion [for Freud] is based entirely on the Oedipus complex of mankind as a whole.⁶⁶

William Meissner, SJ, MD argues that most psychoanalysts would follow the Freudian path to reductionism in respect to mystical experience:

The general analytic perspective has been to describe ecstatic mystical states in terms of the stark polarity of infantile experience...⁶⁷

A contemporary Freudian-school commentary on ecstasy by Raymond Prince and Charles Savage demonstrates Meissner's observation:

The basic characteristic -- that of ecstatic union -- suggests a regression to early nursing experience.⁶⁸

In this regard, Washburn is more open than the Freudian school. As Washburn argues,

Contrary to Freud's conception of the oceanic experience, such a [mystical] merging [with Other] need not be a

⁶⁴ Laurence Nixon, "Maladjustment and Self-actualization in the Life of Teresa of Avila," *Studies in Religion* 18 (Summer 1989): 284.

⁶⁵ Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 155-156.

⁶⁶ Küng, *Freud and the Problem of God*, 39.

⁶⁷ William W. Meissner, SJ, MD, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 151.

⁶⁸ Raymond Prince and Charles Savage, "Mystical States and the Concept of Regression," *The Highest State of Consciousness*, ed. John White (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1972), 127.

regressive capitulation of self-identity and individuation.⁶⁹

Ralph Hood provides a rather convincing alternative understanding to Freud regarding mystical states. It is Hood's contention -- a contention shared by Washburn (as seen in the section devoted to transpersonal transformation) that ego-loss is not necessarily a symptom of a defective ego crumbling with the self regressing to a merger with the mother-ideal, but is rather an acknowledgement of a sturdy ego which is able to be transcended.

[Mystical union] cannot be identical to any infantile state since the infant has no ego or self to be relinquished.⁷⁰

Finally, the American Psychiatric Association warns practitioners not to confuse the "depersonalization or derealization" which transpire in "meditative and trance practices" with "Depersonalization Disorder." Purpose, meaning, result and etiology between the two conditions are held as distinct.⁷¹

(3) There is a Freudian prejudice against virginity/chastity/celibacy as the usual context for contemplative experience in Western Christianity (although it is not an exclusive context).⁷² Freud inconsistently argued that sexual abstinence

⁶⁹ Washburn, "Libido," 14.

⁷⁰ Ralph W. Hood, "Conceptual Criticisms of Regressive Explanations of Mysticism," *Review for Religious Research* 17 (Spring 1976): 185.

⁷¹ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed., (DSM-IV), (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 488.

⁷² See for example, Donald Evans, on marital intercourse as a sacramental vehicle of ecstatic/rapturous union with Trinity. Donald Evans, *Spirituality and Human Nature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 92-93.

forced the "frustrated libido" into "spying out the weaker spots" of the personality, exhibiting itself as a neurotic display of "morbid symptom[ology]." Especially because women are "limited" in the ability to sublimate their unfulfilled sexual desires into more constructive behaviors, most women succumb to "lifelong neurosis." For Teresa -- for any person, but more importantly in women -- sexual repression (= celibacy) should have led/leads to "intellectual inferiority," "fear of death," and a moral/emotional *weakness* which causes one to "become lost in the crowd."⁷³ Yet, how does one, academically proceeding from this mindset, explain why the frequently enraptured Teresa excelled in her period in both poetry and mystical theology; conquered or subdued her fear of death;⁷⁴ and was a prominent foundress and reformer in the face of the Spanish Inquisition and Carmelite opposition? The Washburnian model makes no prejudicial link between celibacy and sexual repression, but treats the need for sexual derepression in all persons, genitally active or inactive.

Marghanita Laski clarifies the issue of sexuality and ecstasy.

It is now possible to dispose of the theory that ecstasy is largely if not wholly a phenomenon of sexual repression a theory often put forward by people sceptical of religious explanations.

Her clinical findings have shown that ecstasy may be triggered by "nature, art, or [human] sexual love" and is not bound to religious

⁷³ Sigmund Freud, "'Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness," *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York, NY: Collier Books, 1963), 31, 32, 36, 40, 34.

⁷⁴ e.g., *Vida* 21:6.

triggers.⁷⁵ As such, if religion is not necessarily a fundamental link with ecstatic experience and genital sexuality might rightly find fulfilment in ecstasy, then both points (2) and (3) have no foundation, and (4) is undermined.

(4) Josef Breuer, an associate of Freud, with Freud *adjusted* the position just given above, and so maintained that among hysterical persons there may be found those of

the clearest intellect, strongest will, greatest character and highest critical power.

This was possible because such hysterics were able to cordon off their hysteria into "hypnoid states," allowing them to be functional in other parts of their lives.⁷⁶ Breuer then went on to label St. Teresa as the "patron saint of hysteria," as she was "a woman of genius with great practical capacity" yet was hysterical.⁷⁷ Multiple reasons were given as the "nexus" of hysteria (with no particular person in mind): "insufficient [sexual] satisfaction," "fright, anxiety and anger," the "oedipal complex," "puberty," "trauma," and "disposition."⁷⁸ James Leuba then proceeded to build upon Breuer, noting Teresa's supposed predisposition, "abnormal sexual life," ascetic "exhaustion," among

⁷⁵ Marghanita Laski, *Ecstasy in Secular and Religious Experiences* (Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1961), 146.

⁷⁶ Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, "On the Psychical Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication," *Studies on Hysteria*, Josef Beuer and Sigmund Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1981), 13.

⁷⁷ Josef Breuer, "Unconscious Ideas and Ideas Inadmissible to Consciousness -- Splitting of the Mind," *Studies on Hysteria*, Josef Beuer and Sigmund Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1981), 232.

⁷⁸ Josef Breuer, "Innate Disposition -- Development of Hysteria," *Studies on Hysteria*, Josef Beuer and Sigmund Freud (London: Hogarth Press, 1981), 244, 245, 246.

others. He characterized Teresa's raptures as so much "recurrent attacks of erotomania." Hedging all bets, Leuba explained that Teresa was not given to "ordinary psychopathy" since such afflicted persons seek "the elimination of the more difficult social relation." As Teresa sought out these situations and confronted them, Teresa was not an ordinary hysteric, but an *extraordinary* hysteric!⁷⁹ According to Romano, Teresa's raptures were substantially "more functional" "dysfunctioning symptoms" of "erotic fantasies" involving Jesus.⁸⁰

But these explanations are insufficient. For example, if predisposition, abnormal sexual life and ascetic exhaustion were the foundation of Teresa's supposed erotomaniacal raptures, how does one explain the raptures of toddlers and pre-schoolers who are not obviously sexually abnormal or ascetical to any degree, or the raptures of the married engaging in healthy sexual lives and producing numerous children?⁸¹ Again, was Teresa sublimating one neurosis into another simply because (1) she cooperated with *dramatic* means of resolving some intrapersonal conflicts, and (2) her love-object was a religious figure? Also, there is an unscientific leap of faith which allows for the valuation of genital sexuality over alternative religio-sexual expressions, alternative expressions being deemed morbid, regardless as to

⁷⁹ James H. Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925), 191, 193, 202.

⁸⁰ Romano, "Psycho-Spiritual History," 290.

⁸¹ Poulain, *Des Grâces D'Oraison*, 256, 272.

whether such alternative expressions may or may not facilitate better social adaptation. Furthermore, could it rather be that ecstasies have a "more or less pronounced hysteric disposition," that is, these persons are hysteric-types vs. hysterics, who possess a "very favorable precondition for the provocation of the ecstatic states of introversion?"⁸² As Nixon suggests, the mystic and the pathological share a hypersensitive profile, a "common temperament."⁸³ Karl Stern, MD, defending the raptures of Teresa, reminds us that

Two psychic phenomena can belong in the same category, and yet one be normal and the other pathological. They are phenomenologically the same but, within their respective contexts, they have two entirely opposite values.⁸⁴

Why phenomena of pathology and authentic mysticism are confused, is answered by Stern: the Freudian psychiatrist/psychologist has consumed a heavy dose of bourgeoisism.

When it comes to the life of the spirit, our concept of normalcy breaks down because it is a concept of conformity, of the *juste milieu*.⁸⁵

Thus Romano, for example, wildly suggests that Teresa, succumbing to surges of hysteria, confused what was largely menopausal, with divine encounters.⁸⁶ But how would Romano adequately explain the

⁸² Ernst Arbman, *Ecstasy or Religious Trance*, vol 3 (Norstedts: Svenska Bokförlaget, 1970), 363b, 363d.

⁸³ Nixon, "Maladjustment," 286, 283.

⁸⁴ Karl Stern, MD, *The Third Revolution: A Study of Psychiatry and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1961), 158.

⁸⁵ Stern, *Third Revolution*, 160.

⁸⁶ Romano, "Psycho-Spiritual History," 291.

similarity of Teresa's raptures with the raptures and ecstasies of other mystics?⁸⁷ Were the male mystics, the toddler mystics and the child-bearing mystics menopausal? Furthermore, critics such as Romano are responsible for explaining the sudden resolution of Teresa's supposed *hysterical* raptures.⁸⁸

The Washburnian model seeks to make distinctions between pathology and spiritual experience, while not *canonizing* everything transpiring in the mystic's life as *mystical*.⁸⁹ Washburn never states that developmental experiences are psychologically *perfect* experiences in and of themselves, nor that the mystic is free of counterfeit experiences. Moreover Teresa, from either self-examination or through observation of others, was able to distinguish a rapture from a "fainting fit" (*un desmayo*) or a hysterical "paroxism" (*un paroxismo*).⁹⁰ In making such distinctions Teresa demonstrated (1) a sufficient sophistication in making distinctions between phenomena, thus adding credibility to her understanding of rapture; and (2) that contemplatives/mystics are occasional victims of acute pathological/pathologicoid episodes prior to integration.

(5) Cristina Mazzoni's recent study, *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, and Gender in European Culture*, carefully traces the sexism inherent in pre-Freudian and Freudian schools in reference

⁸⁷ Read Poulain, *Des Grâces D'Oraison*, 253-293.

⁸⁸ Teresa notes that raptures cease during union. *Moradas* 7:3:12.

⁸⁹ See, for example, Washburn's caution on manias and "morbid vacancies." Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 178.

⁹⁰ *Moradas* 6:4:3.

to ecstasy and rapture. Mazzoni demonstrates that the history of psychoanalysis is rife with prejudice against religious expressions of women. She walks us through the works of Jean-Martin Charcot, Cesare Lombroso, Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud, as examples. The sexist circular reasoning analyzed proceeds something as follows: most ecstatic religious experience occurs in women/ women are at root hysterical/ women's dramatic religious experience is thereby nullified as pathological. Mazzoni's critique of Krafft-Ebing's views on women's religious experience can be adequately applied to all the above named:

All pleasurable religious experience, then, is at once feminized, sexualized, and hence pathologized...into Saint Teresa of Avila's masochistic "hysterical faint."⁹¹

Meissner, a neo-Freudian example, currently (1992) moves from a sexist base when dealing with religious issues. In discussing the psychological make-up of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Meissner theorizes that Ignatius shifted to a spirituality with "maternal" elements. This *shift* was a *capitulation* "to the maternal-feminine superego." A life-long *qualified psychosis* with "hysterical" religious expressions is said to have resulted. Simply put, Ignatius became *feminized* and manifested a mysticism which was both degenerative and "infantile." While this is a simplistic representation of Meissner, and does not reflect his careful nuancing, yet it does

⁹¹ Cristina Mazzoni, *Saint Hysteria: Neurosis, Mysticism, and Gender in European Culture* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 42; see also 17-53 as a whole.

represent his glaring sexism.⁹² Indeed, according to Freud, classical hysteria is largely a *woman's* disease:

The neurosis in question is characteristically feminine.⁹³

It is also a typical Freudian notion that male is *superior* and female *inferior*.⁹⁴

However, Washburn validates both male and female spiritualities. Based upon his research, Washburn concludes that both "women and men eventually converge as they approach the ideal of integration," even though men and women do not always progress with the same facility at each juncture on the path to integration. For example, Washburn maintains that men have a more difficult time with the dark nights than do women.⁹⁵

(6) In order to examine mysticism there is a degree of psychohistory necessary. But, large-scale psychohistory, as it descends from Freudianism, often falls into the trap of idiopathic focus. The less than cautious psychohistorian, after classifying an individual mystic's symptoms against an array of behaviors and situating the mystic's behaviorisms within pathological categories, fails to look at the individual mystic in that mystic's social context. Diane Jonte-Pace, having commented on the negligence which frequently occurs in psychohistories stemming from schools of

⁹² William W. Meissner, SJ, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 89, 336, 329, 375, 333.

⁹³ Sigmund Freud, *Collected Papers*, vol. v., ed. James Strachey (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1959), 254.

⁹⁴ Freud, *Collected Papers*, 257.

⁹⁵ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 292, 290.

psychoanalysis, goes on to argue a more genuine way to approach psychohistory:

What appears different and pathological to the contemporary reader, in other words, must be examined in its cultural context before difference can be equated with pathology.⁹⁶

An example of careless psychohistoricizing is seen in the work of Nancy Partner and her diagnosis for the often *bizarre-to-us* mannerisms of Margery Kempe. Because Partner did not thoroughly examine Margery's period, she was unable to properly assess Margery's violent weepings and thrashings and valued them as symptoms of hysteria.⁹⁷ This mistake had been avoided by Roy Porter who considered the period and found that Margery's

'madness' is intelligible within the pietistic traditions of her time.

Margery's violent weepings, though more exaggerated than those of her contemporaries, were formula-like, conventional practice.⁹⁸ Jonte-Pace argues that similar cultural misunderstandings of Augustine occur in all twenty of the psychohistories collected as *Hunger of the Heart*.⁹⁹ But, why do these misunderstandings of religious figures occur?

As was already noted, psychoanalysis often fails to look at the individual in social context. David Stannard points out this

⁹⁶ Diane Jonte-Pace, "Augustine on the Couch: Psychohistorical (Mis)readings of the Confessions," *Religion* 23 (January 1993): 76.

⁹⁷ Nancy Partner, "And Most of All for Inordinate Love: Desire and Denial in the Book of Margery Kempe," *Thought* 64 (September 1989): 254-267.

⁹⁸ Roy Porter. "Margery Kempe and the Meaning of Madness," *History Today* 38 (February 1988): 39-44.

⁹⁹ Jonte-Pace, "Augustine on the Couch," 76.

tendency towards cultural bias. He argues that

it would clearly be a mistake to apply retrospectively contemporary psychoanalytic or any other highly structured explanatory concepts of motivation to the historical figure's behavior.

The danger occurs when

the psychohistorian employs theoretical models and cognitive assumptions created from the material of the present and then imposes them on the past.¹⁰⁰

This position is also shared by Hans Eysenck.¹⁰¹ An example of superimposing near-21st century Western theoretical models on alternative religious phenomena may be found in the work of Meissner. At one point in *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, Meissner himself falls victim to cultural arrogance when he considers "primitive" religions in the same breath as pathology, in part due to their belief systems which include "immanent justice" and magic.¹⁰² Based upon the views of Stanislav Grof, it would seem that Meissner's position is not unusual to Freudianism (classical or neo-), seeing that Grof insists that

The experiences or behavior of shamans, Indian yogis and sadhus, or spiritual seekers in other cultures would be more than sufficient for a diagnosis of psychosis by Western psychiatric standards.¹⁰³

Washburn, on the other hand, has taken a cross-cultural

¹⁰⁰ David E. Stannard, *Shrinking History: On Freud and the Failure of Psychohistory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 133, 121.

¹⁰¹ Hans Eysenck, "What is Wrong with Psychoanalysis?" *Psycho/History: Readings in the Method of Psychology, Psychoanalysis, and History*, ed. Geoffrey Cocks and Travis L. Crosby (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 13.

¹⁰² Meissner, *Psychoanalysis and Religious Experience*, 143-144.

¹⁰³ Stanislav Grof, *Beyond the Brain: Birth, Death, and Transcendence in Psychotherapy* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1985), 298.

approach in developing his transpersonal theories. He has made every effort to familiarize himself with various spiritual traditions so as to try to approach the commonalities of spiritual encounters on their own terms. Washburn avoids judgments or valuations of *meanings* given to experiences by individuals, but seeks to explain their experiential relevance to psychological development. The transpersonal approach is more positive and less cynical.

I have approached transpersonal theory from a psychodynamic and phenomenological orientation. For this reason my thinking, in drawing upon psychology, religion, and philosophy, has drawn most heavily upon dynamic depth psychology [especially Jung], psychospiritually oriented religion [such as ascetical and mystical theology, yoga, alchemy], and existential-phenomenological philosophy [especially Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Sartre].¹⁰⁴

(7) Finally, but not exclusively, Freudianism is often a closed system. For example, Meissner is convinced that at no level of human personality development does the human person successfully escape the possibility of psychosis. At the stage where other psychologists/psychiatrists would speak of self-actualization as a reality (e.g. Goldstein, Maslow, Fowler), Meissner sees the looming presence of mental disease. For Meissner, even the universalized person is capable of "unrealistic fanaticism and paranoid psychopathology."¹⁰⁵ Washburn, on the other hand, writes of transpersonal "horizons" which can be realized during integration. He has given three categories to these horizons, namely: "prophetic

¹⁰⁴ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., ix-x.

¹⁰⁵ William W. Meissner, SJ, MD, *Life and Faith: Psychological Perspectives on Religious Experience* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1987), 135.

vision, saintly compassion, and mystical illumination." As such Washburn is convinced that an authentic state of "outreaching spirit and deep genuineness" is possible.¹⁰⁶ The prospect of "ego-death," that is "psychosis," looms through and up to the traditional "dark night" of the spirit, but ceases when the personality begins to "regenerate."

Regeneration in spirit is a movement away from destructive discharges and toward more peaceful and creative upwellings of physico-dynamic potentials.¹⁰⁷

To summarize: I have considered seven reasons why I believe Freudianism to be deficient in the examination of mysticism in general, and rapture and ecstasy in particular. Since these deficiencies have not found their way into the theoretical framework of Michael Washburn, I find his theories more suited for the examination of Teresian raptures from a psychological point of view. The seven deficiencies focused upon were: (1) a dogmatic atheism; (2) the reduction of religion to the Oedipal complex; (3) prejudice against celibacy/chastity/virginity; (4) frequent confusion of mysticism with hysteria, and hypersensitivity with hysteria; (5) the psychoanalytic school being rooted in sexism, especially in its dealings with women's religious expression; (6) the tendency of Freudian psychohistorians to neglect proper sociological contextualization of their religious subjects; and (7) the closedness of a system, which does not allow for an ultimate exclusion of the possibility of psychosis among more

¹⁰⁶ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 244, 248.

¹⁰⁷ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 183, 186, 190.

psychologically developed persons.

6. The Psychological Significance of Rapture According to Michael Washburn

The purpose of this section is to examine the phenomenon of *arrobamiento* according to the Washburnian transpersonal model of spiritual development, specifically sexual derepression. I will treat Michael Washburn's model as a more psychologically comprehensive understanding of mystical experience, especially since having established a religious and cultural context for Teresa's erotic-violent irruptions, and having explained her mystical-theological significance of such eruptions. Washburn's model expands (and adjusts) the notions already established, rather than dismissing them outright, as if there were little sociological, anthropological or historical import to such accounts.¹⁰⁸ Supporting external sources will also be included.

In the Washburnian model, the mystical life passes through and between four modes: *awareness*;¹⁰⁹ "regression in the service of transcendence;"¹¹⁰ regeneration;¹¹¹ and integration.¹¹² The

¹⁰⁸ Carole Slade argues that most Freudian critics "equate mystical with pre-Oedipal experience, an anthropocentric concept that when fitted onto the mystics creates numerous distortions, most important in Teresa's case, a failure to account for her action in the world." Carole Slade, *St. Teresa of Avila: Author of A Heroic Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 133.

¹⁰⁹ Here, often through meditation, "layers of the embedded unconscious are brought to awareness." This period constitutes a pre-awakening, a period of assessment. Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 150; see also *Ego*, 2nd ed., 161.

¹¹⁰ This regression is not regression as understood in a Freudian sense, whereby the mystic returns to earlier psychological patterns and states which are detrimental to the personality. Rather, "the ego undergoing this regression loses its position of psychic ascendancy and yields to extraegoic powers and possibilities. Psychic life ceases being in the service of the ego, and the ego begins to be in the service of *greater* psychospiritual forces." The personality is enriched by these regressions as more of its potentiality is being

psychological significance of mysticism is the "unseating" of the ego¹¹³ and its hold in the personality, so that the "Dynamic Ground"¹¹⁴ might be "derepressed." Then, both the ego and the Ground are "integrated," with the Ground as sovereign of the personality.¹¹⁵ Washburn's model departs from Freud in important ways. One manner is the notion that the "id...is not a permanent constitutional structure of the psyche." Washburn views the id simply as "a specific *developmental* organization -- of the nonegoic pole of the psyche," which hopefully is "outgrown and surpassed."¹¹⁶ Of a similar mind, Carl Jung held that the "ego" "evolves" out of the "self," which is an "unconscious substrate." "The self must cause the ego to renounce" its "claim" of *freedom* in the personality.¹¹⁷

In the derepression of regression, the body is said to awaken:

made available. Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 154; see also *Ego*, 1st ed., 155-185. It is a period of marked "deconstruction." *Ego*, 2nd ed., 203.

¹¹¹ This is a "period of psychic renewal." It is here that after derepression, there is a "calming of psychodynamic potentials, the purging of mental-egoic resistances, and the mending of the psychic fissure caused by primal repression." Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 203, 205.

¹¹² Here, Washburn maintains that the "mind-body dualism characteristic" of egoic/narcissistic states prior to awareness "is overcome and a higher mind-body whole is brought into being." Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 231-232. The dualism which is overcome is understood as an internal "alienation" of sorts. Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 216.

¹¹³ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd. ed., 27.

¹¹⁴ The Dynamic Ground is none other than "the dynamic unconscious," the "*fuel* of psychic systems," which manifests itself in three manners: "spirit," "nonspecific amplifier" or "psychic energy" and "libido." Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 4, 110, 111.

¹¹⁵ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 23, 127.

¹¹⁶ Washburn, "Libido," 24.

¹¹⁷ Jung, "Transformation Symbolism," 155.

An awakening of sexuality becomes an awakening of somatic experience generally: polymorphous sexuality.¹¹⁸

Bodily awakening, thus, has a "distinctly sexual complexion or at least aspect."¹¹⁹ Sexuality becomes an issue in the spiritual life through multiple regressions in service of transcendence. The "instincts" are "reawakened" and as such are perceived as *demonic*.¹²⁰

The awakening of nonegoic life generally might in some instances seem like an awakening of a 'beast' within.¹²¹

Sexuality assails the ego in quite negative ways and fills the person with a sense of impurity, horror and/or disgust.¹²² Eventually, this situation changes, with sexuality no longer experienced as an enemy to fight or from which to retreat, but is welcomed as a companion to be integrated in the personality. In regression the body is "resurrected" through the ego's descent from its place of authority, and in regeneration the ego is "reincarnated."¹²³ The "initial awakening" of nonegoic material of the Ground may seem at times "like an awakening of primitive

¹¹⁸ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 252.

¹¹⁹ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 252.

¹²⁰ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 198.

¹²¹ Washburn, "Libido," 25.

¹²² These would compare with *typical* periods in the mystic's life where the mystic complains of near-traumatic sexual temptations and demonic encounters. Theologically, I am not insisting upon reducing these temptations and demonic encounters to pure psychological dynamics. See Poulain, *Des Grâces D'Oraison*, 463-482; Tanquerey, *Précis de Théologie Ascétique de Mystique*, 894; Royo, OP and Aumann, OP, *The Theology of Christian Perfection*, 244-249.

¹²³ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 231.

sexual energy."¹²⁴

In the mode of regeneration libido,¹²⁵ which includes sexuality,¹²⁶ begins to "energize" the "psychic system." When the libido "moves in strong pulses or surges,"¹²⁷ ecstasies¹²⁸ -- "infusive-ecstatic cathexes"¹²⁹ -- can occur.¹³⁰ These cathexes continue the unseating of the ego by "transporting, bursting or dissolving it."¹³¹

Awe and ecstasy reflect the surging action of the power of the Ground, which stuns or dizzies the ego (awe) or infuses it beyond the bursting point (ecstasy).¹³²

These ecstasies are

stunning impacts or sudden eruptions¹³³ that indicate that the ego is still not in full alignment with the Ground. These states are most violent in the early

¹²⁴ Washburn, "Libido," 25.

¹²⁵ The psychic energy of the Ground. Washburn, "Libido," 6.

¹²⁶ Washburn, "Libido," 1-4.

¹²⁷ In *Moradas* 6:4:13, Teresa describes a rich symptomatology for rapture: shallow breathing, deadening of exterior senses, coldness in extremities...

¹²⁸ These include raptures.

¹²⁹ A cathexis is, by definition, "the investing of libidinal energy in an activity, an object or a person." Arthur S. Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (London: Penguin Books, 1985), 111.

¹³⁰ This may explain the presence of ecstasies and raptures at this formative time in the life of the adult mystic, but this does not explain the nature and purpose of ecstasies and raptures which last for nearly the whole of the mystic's spiritual career, or the historically recorded Christian toddler and preschooler ecstasies. It may be that raptures, *in the period of regeneration*, serve as vehicles for further derepression. See Poulain, *Des Grâces D'Oraison*, 256-257.

¹³¹ Washburn, "Libido," 6. In *Moradas* 6:4:3-5, Teresa explains rapture as burning up the soul, raising and joining it to God (a kind of expansion), suspending its self-consciousness, yet illuminating it with divine secrets.

¹³² Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 222.

¹³³ See *Moradas* 6:5:1.

phases of the regenerative period.¹³⁴

They so activate the ego that "ego boundaries"¹³⁵ may give way.¹³⁶

This does not mean that the ego is destroyed, impaired or damaged.

Rather, as Epstein explains,

It is not that the ego disappears, but that the belief in the ego's solidity, the identification with ego's representations [the actual internal experience of one's self], is abandoned in the realization of egolessness.¹³⁷

Nixon maintains that "unusual behaviors and states of consciousness" integrally contribute to the "process of integration;" as such "they cannot be considered" *ipso facto* "dysfunctional." Simply because such states are "non-normal" in the sense that many persons do not derepress and regenerate, and still fewer to such great degrees, such states are not the norm of human behavior or consciousness, does not make them "pathological."¹³⁸ Nixon adds,

The effect of the bizarre states experienced by mystics is growth promoting...¹³⁹

Jung was of the same position:

It is quite possible for a more compendious personality to emerge [from unconscious elements] in the course of

¹³⁴ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 223. In *Vida* 38:11, Teresa notes that rapture may leave the mystic stupefied.

¹³⁵ Washburn, "Libido," 6.

¹³⁶ Washburn, "Libido," 7. In *Moradas* 6:4:8, Teresa speaks of being absorbed in God.

¹³⁷ Mark Epstein, "The Varieties of Egolessness," *Paths Beyond Ego: The Transpersonal Vision*, ed. Roger Walsh, MD, PhD, and Frances Vaughan, PhD (Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1993), 123.

¹³⁸ Nixon, "Maladjustment," 295.

¹³⁹ Nixon, "Maladjustment," 283.

development and take the ego into its service.¹⁴⁰

These cathexes "are experienced as either intensely pleasurable or intensely painful."¹⁴¹ That is, there is a "bivalent" characteristic to these ecstasies. Washburn argues that it is the "ego's ability or inability" to favorably respond with these "infusive" upsurges which determines whether the experience is more or less "pleasurable or painful."¹⁴² Jung, who may be cited in support of at least some of Washburn's position, adds that the "transformative process" is quite often experienced as "punishment" or "torture."¹⁴³ He went on further to say

Every step forward along the path of individuation is achieved only at the cost of suffering.¹⁴⁴

In seeing it as tempering Washburn, we may have recourse to Jung who argued that fear in religious experience¹⁴⁵ is often bound up with fear of self-sacrifice -- i.e., giving without assurance of return, and thus such a fear witnesses to an element of selfishness. Jung insisted that there is a "selfish claim bound up with every *gift*."¹⁴⁶ Gift anticipates a return, self-sacrifice

¹⁴⁰ Jung, "Transformation Symbolism," 154.

¹⁴¹ Washburn, "Libido," 8. Numerous Teresian examples of this have been given above.

¹⁴² Washburn, "Libido," 9. In *Ego*, 1st ed., Washburn clarifies this notion: The bivalence is "*seeming* bivalence": i.e., it is not constitutional but perceptual. 113.

¹⁴³ Jung, "Transformation Symbolism," 167. Again, examples of this valuation or sensation in Teresian rapture have been given above.

¹⁴⁴ Jung, "Transformation Symbolism," 168.

¹⁴⁵ Note that in *Vida* 20:7, as mentioned above, Teresa initially experienced a strong sense of fear when being enraptured.

¹⁴⁶ Italics are mine.

anticipates nothing.¹⁴⁷ Whether gratifying or hurtful, the ego is said to experience a sense of being "overpowered by libido."¹⁴⁸ The ego, Washburn argues, can withstand these upsurges, if it is "self-possessed" and *harmonizing* with "dynamic life" (the Ground) and will not "suffer [from Freudian] regression in so yielding."¹⁴⁹ Washburn believes these infusive-ecstasies are characteristic of the Teresian path and Teresa.¹⁵⁰

Washburn's theory poses a solid psychological explanation for the violence and eroticism found in Teresa of Avila's raptures. Such violence and intense eroticism as expressed in rapture is seen as developmental. For, as the spiritual-psychological process continues, it is "less a matter of agony and violence."¹⁵¹ Teresa concurs, in that after transforming union raptures, she says, do not happen.¹⁵² Note though that this transpersonal theory does not deny that pathology may arise in the transforming person's life, nor does it argue that all raptures are free of pathological

¹⁴⁷ Jung, "Transformation Symbolism," 153. This attitude of self-sacrifice is not missing in Teresa, even though it was originally paralyzed by fear. Teresa describes a diminishment of the fear of death (*Vida* 38:5), as well as an increase in desire for trials, as the outcome of frequent enrapturing (*Vida* 39:26).

¹⁴⁸ Washburn, "Libido," 13.

¹⁴⁹ Washburn, "Libido," 14. Teresa distinguishes rapture and other intense forms of contemplation from fainting fits, convulsions (*Moradas* 6:4:3), melancholia (*Moradas* 6:1:14) and *oceanic* absorption (*Moradas* 6:2:5), the latter which she especially finds pointless and dangerous.

¹⁵⁰ Washburn, "Libido," 18.

¹⁵¹ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 194.

¹⁵² *Moradas* 7:3:12.

aspects or that pseudo-ecstasies cannot transpire.¹⁵³ Other psychologies will be shown to cross boundaries into theology when they contend with rapture as *gift* originating in God, and seek to refute such claims through charges of hysteria. Rather, Washburn takes a pure psychological stance on rapture, which allows one to appreciate the psychological dynamics of rapture as cleansing device, as purgative venture, thus allowing for its bizarreness.¹⁵⁴ Again, Washburn's focus is not on the rapture itself, but on the *outcome* of the rapture: not on the feebleness in the steps of a toddler which are to be expected, but on the exertion of will, independence and increase in mobility and physical stamina. The focus on rapture, again, appears to be some psychologists' attempt to countermand theology's concern for *authenticity* (divine origin or impetus) in raptures.

Still, Michael Washburn's approach ought to be considered more of an ideal from a near-21st century incarnational perspective, as to the unfolding of the human personality in the mystical life. Donald Evans, for example, in a lecture cautioned his audience not to attribute too much innovation to the mysticism of St. Teresa. He warned,

In spite of this emphasis on embodied passion in Jesus ["rage at the money-lenders in the Temple, grief over Jerusalem and Lazarus..."], however, Christian mysticism has generally failed to include the body. On the contrary, even though the final stages for [Meister] Eckhart and Teresa [of Avila] involve affirmations of

¹⁵³ Washburn makes it clear that the ego has the potential to "abort the birthing process" of the fuller personality. Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 193.

¹⁵⁴ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 194.

this world, the body is not really integrated. And much of Christian mysticism has stressed the need to transcend the body, never really to return to it -- unless to a new 'spiritual body' which involved nothing from our animal nature.¹⁵⁵

From what we know from Teresa's writings, her raptures appear not to have led to a complete re-embodiment, of a thoroughly polymorphous quality to her being.¹⁵⁶ If we were to borrow mystical concepts from the East, Teresa's raptures were as if the two sexual energy points were transplanted to the heart and head points without incorporating or diffusing energies fully outward polymorphically throughout the body.¹⁵⁷ Thus, Teresa's valuation of transverberation and holy madness.¹⁵⁸ Teresa, knowingly or unknowingly, circumscribed her experience. Her emphasis on chastity¹⁵⁹ should not solely be considered a repudiation of inordinacy. It may reflect, also, a discomfort with the degree of eroticism she may have felt, being somewhat confused over it in a day which associated sexuality solely with the genitals, and not as a valuable element in mystical experience. For Teresa values rapture not just as a violent union with an impassioned God, but as

¹⁵⁵ Donald Evans, "Mysticism and Everyday Life," Lecture. (Toronto, ON: Victoria College, University of Toronto, March 7, 1996), 22.

¹⁵⁶ Although, we do not know what aspects of Teresa's religious experiences she mentally reserved, and of which she did not write.

¹⁵⁷ Once in a while Teresa experienced a ?sensuous? joy in the body. *Vida* 20:21.

¹⁵⁸ As to the madness, not only does Teresa refer to the madness of Fr. Mariano's raptures (*Fundaciones* 28:31), but she describes a condition in which the person is made manic by rapture, such that he/she experiences mixed and overwhelming sensations of blindness, absorption, astonishment, and faintness (*Vida* 20:29).

¹⁵⁹ *Cuentas* 53 (58): 24 (18).

a liberation from the body.¹⁶⁰ This may explain the degree to which Teresa feels disjointed, as noted above: mystical disjunction is partially due to an unconscious (or even an undiscussed conscious) contributive resistance to the diffusing of energy into the body. Could not the external manifestation in Teresa's raptures contain in part an hysterical aspect, of an unconscious effort to quell sexual derepression? Washburn argues that polymorphic sexuality in the integrated person allows for the

understanding that erotogenic and spiritual experience are expressions of the same sacred power, a power that, when awakened, is a palpable presence within the body. The integrated person realizes that the body is the native vehicle of spirituality and therefore that spirituality is at home in the body and in all of the body's expressions.¹⁶¹

For example, polymorphism leads to creativity and dynamism.¹⁶² In Teresa, creativity was demonstrated in the founding of monasteries and in writing, but there was little *sense* in Teresa's mind of her being a "numinous personality."¹⁶³ One might consider that Teresa's raptures facilitated her emotionally intense friendships,¹⁶⁴ but Teresa legislated against physical demonstrations of affection.¹⁶⁵ In Teresa's raptures there was an intense sense of oneness with God, but this never translated to a

¹⁶⁰ *Vida* 21:6.

¹⁶¹ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 311.

¹⁶² Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 205-206.

¹⁶³ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 205.

¹⁶⁴ In *Camino* 4 Teresa writes on the glory of spiritual friendships.

¹⁶⁵ *Constituciones* 28.

sense of oneness with the whole of creation,¹⁶⁶ however much she was concerned over her human neighbor.¹⁶⁷ It is true that Teresa eventually advocated a lifestyle in which the mystic would secure a state where "Martha and Mary" coalesced,¹⁶⁸ but I do not believe that she fully understood the significance/import/validity/reality of Martha and Mary as re-embodiment of soul.

¹⁶⁶ The world was not an enchanted playground for Teresa. Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 226-229.

¹⁶⁷ See Washburn's notion of "saintly compassion." Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 246.

¹⁶⁸ i.e., the active and contemplative vocations. *Meditaciones* 7:3.

Chapter IV: *Mad Mystic, Mad God*

I have examined the dramatic interplay between God/Christ and the now love-sick, now enraptured mystic. Afterwards, I applied transpersonal methodologies to Teresian mystical experience when pondering the psychological ramifications of somatic expressions, sexual derepression and personality reorganization during rapture. I reflected upon the insufficiencies in applying a Freudian methodology to the examination of Teresian phenomena. To conclude, it now remains for me to touch upon some theological concerns which I laid out in the introduction to this dissertation in respect to rapture in general, and Teresian rapture in particular.

1. The Accommodation of God in Rapture: Is God *Really* Mad?

God loves man with the madness of love, and He tries man's love to the point of madness.¹

When considering the violence and eros present in the raptures of Teresa of Avila, the inquisitive might wonder whether these qualities were more telling of Teresa or God, or actually both. Parker takes the stance that

If God revealed Himself and His nature and purpose to men,...He had to reveal Himself in a way comprehensible to the people receiving the revelation: in the only concepts and through the only emotions that their particular stage of culture permitted them to formulate and feel. Similarly if God can communicate Himself to individual men He can do so only through the psychological, intellectual and affective mechanisms which He has Himself implanted in human nature.²

¹ Karl Stern, *The Third Revolution: A Study of Psychiatry and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1961), 160.

² Alexander A. Parker, *The Philosophy of Love in Spanish Literature: 1480 - 1680*, ed. Terence O'Reilly (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1985), 74-75.

I am going to build my argument on Parker's understanding. This means beginning with the assumption that God chooses particular vessels at select times and in unique places in order to present Himself anew. This continuation of God's *revelation* (consonant with the deposit of faith) consists of those aspects of God's Self which, because of the present human dynamics, can now be received and appreciated. As David Reed has stated the subject,

The story of salvation history is one of divine initiative breaking into our world and opening up new possibilities.³

For Teresa, attention is placed on the *Provisional God* -- "Lord," "His Majesty" (i.e. *my King*), "Spouse"⁴ -- rather than on the *Ontological God* in respect to the workings of mystical experiences.⁵ Teresa seems to have focused on how God seemingly *attuned* Himself to her and others via mystical relations within the plan of salvation, not on God as He is in Himself. For example, in *Way of Perfection* Teresa writes that

*Háces a nuestra medida...*⁶

³ David Reed, "Field Education: Theological and Spiritual Considerations" (Paper: Delivered at Twenty-Third Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education, January 18-22, 1995), 5.

⁴ Since the use of these titles by Teresa for the Trinity and for Christ are standard throughout Teresa's texts, I am giving no particular references.

⁵ That is, Teresa's theology is practical, not speculative. These terms, *provisional* and *ontological*, are mine, employed here in order to convey Teresa's thought in contemporary categories. For Teresa, the God she knows is *Provisional God*: God as He temporally relates to us and is experienced by us in transition. We are moving about in the "Palace" of God's essence, able to discover or reject Him anew. But the provisionalism is not solely a matter of our mutability, but also God's desire to communicate in sundry manners (*Moradas* VI:10:1-3). The concern of Teresa is not with God as *Ontological God*, that is, God in God's Self. Yet, this does not mean that Teresa cannot acknowledge God as *Ontological God*, because Teresa states, at one point, that God is changeless in His essence (*Paciencia en las adversidades*).

⁶ "He makes Himself to our measure." *Camino* 28:11.

God comes to us like manna and conforms to our ability to taste.⁷ That is, God adjusts to our limits/condition.⁸ Furthermore, God does not adapt His communication of Self based solely upon our personal limitations, but also according to our authentic desire. Thus Teresa states that

*El Rey quiere...que beba conforme a su deseo.*⁹

Again, Teresa addresses God's conformity to the degree and quality of our love:

*Dar el premio conforme al amor que le tenemos.*¹⁰

It almost seems that God is restricted by our will in mystical matters:

*El se hace el sujeto...a vuestra voluntad.*¹¹

The adaptation of God to us in mystical experiences, especially rapture, suggests -- it would seem -- a compromise on God's part to our natures, our wants and our needs. Even John of the Cross,¹² relying on Thomas Aquinas, writes that

*Dios mueve todas las cosas al modo de ellas.*¹³

⁷ *Meditaciones* 5:2, on *Ws* 16:20.

⁸ Analogically, as to message, Moses is said to have adjusted the Law to the people who were hard-hearted (Mt 19:8). According to means, God is said to have used an angelic apparition to announce to Mary her divine pregnancy, and angelic dreams to reassure Joseph (Lk 1:26ff; Mt 1:20ff).

⁹ "The King wishes that she drink in conformity with her desire." *Meditaciones* 6:3.

¹⁰ "He gives the regard in conformity with the love which we have for Him." *Moradas* 3:1:7.

¹¹ "He fastens Himself to your will...", i.e., He submits... *Camino* 26:4.

¹² It is important here to remind my reading audience of the cross-fertilization of thought which occurred between Teresa and John.

¹³ "God moves all things according to their modes." John of the Cross, *Subida* 17:2.

And again,

*Cuando uno ama y hace bien a otro, hácele bien y ámale según su condición y sus propiedades.*¹⁴

It is not that God subjects Himself to our willfulness or fancy. Rather, according to Teresa, God obliges our most inner desire for Him and our true needs:

*Al menos será lo que más nos conviene, sin duda ninguna.*¹⁵

Yet Tanquerey,¹⁶ it would seem, infers that divine communications reflect more the nature of God, as he argues for the autonomy and wisdom of God:

*Dieu l'accorde à qui il veut, quand il le veut et de la manière qu'il le veut.*¹⁷

Nor is Teresa one-sided in her understanding of the relational dynamics in rapture or other forms of contemplation. Quite like Tanquerey, Teresa writes,

*Da el Señor cuando quiere y como quiere y a quien quiere.*¹⁸

It appears that, though God modifies Himself to us so that we not only benefit from the communication and come to know something of

¹⁴ "When one loves and does good to the other, [he] does good to [the other] and loves [the other] according to [the other's] nature and [] properties." John of the Cross, *Llama*, *Redacción definitiva* 3:6.

¹⁵ "At least what He does [will] for us is, without a doubt, most suitable to us." *Moradas* 3:2:11.

¹⁶ Turn of 20th century master, along with Auguste Poulain and Evelyn Underhill, of mystical and ascetical theology and phenomenology.

¹⁷ "God accords [contemplation] to whom He wills, when He wills it and in the manner He wills it." Adolphe Tanquerey, *Précis de Théologie Ascétique de Mystique*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Desclée et Cie, 1924) 882.

¹⁸ "The Lord gives [His gifts] when He wishes, how He wishes, and to whom He wishes." *Moradas* 4:1:2.

Him,¹⁹ He communicates with a specific intention in mind. Therefore, Teresa confesses God's every intention to bring His plan to fruitfulness:

*Ello se ha de cumplir, que queramos o no.*²⁰

According to the Teresian understanding, God, in freedom, chooses to express something of God's Self by means of, say, raptures. The person who participates in these raptures is chosen not only to encounter God's Self, but to engage God in a way suitable to His design. The person chosen to receive raptures/open to receiving raptures is chosen/open precisely because God both wishes to ravish the mystic for relational ends and the greater good of the Church. The manner in which the raptures transpire reflect these intentions as well as the mystic's nature and needs, and the cultural setting in which the mystic finds his/herself. Raptures are erotic and violent, therefore, because (1) God is passionate and greater than we can fully receive; (2) because the mystic is moved to passion/to receiving passionately, yet the human frame (soul/body) is fragile; (3) because of the biases, limitations and resistances on the part of the mystic, with such defects being suitable to God's design;²¹ and (4) because God wishes the world to hear Him passionately and forcefully. These erotic and violent capitulations or accommodations, as aspects of

¹⁹ As parallel examples, the Divine Word is said to have *emptied* Himself for our sake (Phil 2:7); or that the Father is said to have spoken to us in sundry ways and finally through Jesus (Hb 1:1).

²⁰ "He will bring [His will] to completion whether we like [it] or not." *Camino* 32:4.

²¹ "Suitable to God's design": i.e. these human defects become the instruments of God's revelation to the mystic, to the greater Christian community, and to the world community.

a transcendent madness, both reveal and hide God's Self.²²

What exactly do I mean by/what is entailed by a *divine accommodation*, and then, by a divine accommodation of *madness*? In Philippians, Paul speaks of the Divine Word reorienting *Wordness* to creation by a hypostasis with perfect Humanity, in the words *semetipsum exinanivit* (Phil 2:7).²³ I am arguing that when the Word empties Word, first, the Word empties Word into the Humanity of Jesus, as to pour into or load into. But, there is also an *accompanying* unloading of, emptying of, as in the sense of disburdening by withholding. If the heavens are said not to contain God (1 Kg 8:27) then neither does the Humanity of Jesus, even while there is a hypostasis between the Humanity of Jesus and the Person of the Word. As to the latter, there is a similarity when Trinity communicates to us in mystical prayer: God may be said to empty His Self according to various human categories. God simultaneously engages and withholds. God reveals while obscuring. This obscurance is not by way of defect, but rather munificence. The more comprehensive or penetrating the accommodation, the more objective the revelation is; that is, the more the accommodation proximates Ontological God. The God without category is not the God we come to know but rather a *God of category*, as we continuously long for God as He is in Himself.

Expounding on Sg 1:1, for Teresa, the equivalent of category

²² In parallel, the Incarnation was said to allow the Son to reveal the Father, and yet only the Son sees the Father (Jn 1:18).

²³ "He emptied/unloaded Himself."

or accomodation is the figurative "kiss" (*el beso*) from the mouth of the Godhead. In the first chapter of *Meditaciones*, Teresa focuses on or underscores four religious phenomena as if they were kisses from God: the Incarnation of the Divine Word as Human,²⁴ mystical lovesickness,²⁵ the Eucharistic Species,²⁶ and spiritual peace and friendship with God/Christ.²⁷ In chapter 3, Teresa adds a fifth, that of union with the will of God through transforming union.²⁸ There are definite erotic overtones to this one kiss which is these five kisses: it is less the familial kiss of a Father or Brother, but more the erotic kiss from a Spouse²⁹ to a lover.³⁰ And, at least in the instance of mystical lovesickness, it is a kiss which can drive one mad.³¹ We might say that all five kisses have the potential of being enmaddening, since they are five expressions of the same source-kiss. For, if we truly appreciated the mystery and reality of the Eucharistic Species, we would have to be outside of/beside ourselves in ecstasy or rapture to tolerate such enlightenment.³² Now, this kiss, it seems for Teresa, is a

²⁴ *Meditaciones* 1:9.

²⁵ *Meditaciones* 1:10.

²⁶ *Meditaciones* 1:11.

²⁷ *Meditaciones* 1:12.

²⁸ *Meditaciones* 3:1.

²⁹ *Meditaciones* 1:6.

³⁰ *Meditaciones* 3:7.

³¹ *Meditaciones* 1:10.

³² *Meditaciones* 1:12.

focal point, a touch or brush with the Immanent Transcendent,³³ Who of His very Self is greater and other than His kiss. In kissing, God humbles Himself.³⁴ God paradoxically remains the same and yet is lesser for or condescends to us. Kissing is the manner or method by which God makes Himself known: kissing is God's accommodation to us.

Another metaphor Teresa uses for God's accommodating the mystic is that of the *sombra* ("shadow") or *nube* ("cloud") of God.³⁵ Teresa bases this notion on Lk 1:35 and the overshadowing of the Virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit, and the shadow cast by the Lover in Sg 2:3-4.³⁶ The brilliance of God's Sun is so very overwhelming that God necessarily obscures Himself while He reveals, by means of His ability to cast a *shadow*.³⁷ Yet, even this notion of shadow has its erotic overtones, since as I said, it is the shadow of the Lover, and a shadow under which the beloved takes to eating the fruits of the Lover.³⁸ What are these fruits, but the bivalent experience of a *mad* Trinity: "ardent desires" (*ardientes deseos*), i.e., lovesickness; or intense trials and sufferings, i.e., divine

³³ For God is the Lord (*Meditaciones* 1:2) Who is within the soul (*Meditaciones* 2:5).

³⁴ *Es posible humillarse Dios a tanto*: "It is possible for God to humble Himself so much." *Meditaciones* 1:5.

³⁵ *Meditaciones* 5:4.

³⁶ *Meditaciones* 5:2.

³⁷ *Meditaciones* 5:2, 4.

³⁸ *Meditaciones* 5:2.

severity.³⁹

I am suggesting that in the category of state of mind (as to soundness and quality), Teresa's most profound experience of God is that of *Blessed Madness*, of an encounter which is a-sane or without sanity, which is excessive in that it tramples human notions of sanity (which is ego-centric, morally-impaired, circumspect, predictable, rational and conformist by definition).⁴⁰ For, consider my earlier exposition of Teresa's walk through the interior castle of the soul. Note, that the closer the mystic is to union, the more that God comes to the soul as Mad/enmaddening.⁴¹ Humanly speaking, the mystic may encounter God as the Holy Fool parodying human insanity. It is as if God mocks, through the mystic, the marketplace's convention and sanity. We may analogically apply the Psalmist's words: *Et tu, Domine, deridebis eos* (Ps 58/59:9).⁴² Thus, for Teresa and other mystics, God does not hesitate to come as an effusive mania, a crazed Lover, or as severity. After a Teresian understanding, as an accommodation, *Blessed Madness* is more proximate to the *Hidden Essence* than to experience God as rational equilibrium. In

³⁹ *Meditaciones* 5:5.

⁴⁰ As to rationality being a definition or synonym for sanity in our contemporary Western world, see Louis A. Sass, *Madness and Modernism: Insanity in the Light of Modern Art, Literature, and Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 1.

⁴¹ In Mansion 1-3 the mystic may experience mild ennui. In Mansion 4 the mystic might be given to melancholy or mystical lovesickness. In Mansion 5, the involvement of the mystic in God intensifies to spiritual inebriation. In Mansion 6, this engagement magnifies to experiences of God's severity (through trials) or God's mania (through rapture). In Mansion 7, union with God is offered as a condition marked by excessiveness.

⁴² "And You, O Lord, laughingly scorn them."

Meditaciones Teresa eschews theological rationalism, as inappropriate for the human understanding of the more profound mysteries of God. For it seems that neither "reason" (*razón*) nor "measurements" (*medidas*; rigorous accuracy) are what is necessary to encounter these mysteries.⁴³

Another way of looking at divine accommodations bears apparent resemblance to heretical notions of *kenosis*, but is significantly different. The term, *kenosis*, is applicable in the situation of divine accommodation if we imbue it with a corrected meaning. Namely, as "Christ emptied Himself, not by laying down His divinity, but by concealing it under the form of Man,"⁴⁴ so in His relations with us in contemplation God/Christ reflexively effects a kenotic-like concealment. This concealment or accommodation is not a thing -- an entity -- between God and us, but rather a mode of encounter which speaks as much of what God withholds, as the needful adaptation to us where we are. The closer to the Essential God, the more magnificent the accommodation, and the less artificial. The accommodation becomes an artifice only when we idolatrously make it out to be Ontological God. An accommodation of God is not a divine diminution, but rather more or less an eclipse of God.

A similar notion to divine accommodations can be found in Eastern Orthodoxy. Gregory Palamas argued that what we attribute to God does "not exist in Him, but around Him." What we call

⁴³ *Meditaciones* 6:7.

⁴⁴ "Kenosis," *A Catholic Dictionary*, ed. Donald Attwater (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1949), 273.

attributes are "energies of God," not God Himself. We are said to participate in these divine energies which proceed from "the Superessential," i.e. God as God's Self.⁴⁵ As a Catholic theologian I find, on first consideration, such discussion of *energies* disconcerting, sounding as it does like emanationist language. But, Archimandrite Kallistos Ware cautions us that these energies are not "*intermediary* between God and man." Rather, these energies "are God Himself in His activity and self-manifestation." They represent the God "unknowable in His essence," "yet, known" in His encounters.⁴⁶ Teresa's *Blessed Madness* would then be an equivalent to a divine energy of sorts. The language of divine accommodation, as I have so stated it, emphasizes God's adaptation to creatures and the fact that God may come to the mystic without mediation; the language of divine energy emphasizes Unknowable God vitally, energetically and personally engaging creatures.

Finally, I would be amiss if I passed over Calvin's notion of *accommodation of knowledge* in silence. John Calvin, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, maintains that Scripture refers to God in anthropomorphic terms. The Holy Spirit, through Scripture, has chosen to speak to us in a "lisp," in the baby-language which a nurse lovingly babbles to her infant charge. God condescends willingly to His beloved children, employing simple means of communication -- here, unembellished concepts frequently

⁴⁵ See Gregory Palamas, *Gregory Palamas: The Triads*, trans. Nicholas Gendle (New York, NY: Paulist, 1983), 95-97. Also Blais, *Dynamics of Divine and Human Playfulness*, 209-210, 214.

⁴⁶ Archimandrite Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1980), 1981.

found in Scripture -- so as to convey knowledge of Himself to the simplest of humans. Hence, Calvin writes,

Thus such forms of speaking do not so much express clearly what God is like as accommodate the knowledge of Him to our slight capacity. To do this He must descend far beneath His loftiness.⁴⁷

Calvin suggests, therefore, that revelation, at least Scripture, is of a medium which is adjusted to the weaknesses of the human audience. It appears that Calvin and Teresa both have -- in common -- a sense of God addressing the Christian in terms by which the Christian can come into a deeper relationship with God. Calvin focuses on God's Scriptural Word as His means of accommodation, and Teresa emphasizes God's mystical encounter as adaptation to the Christian. Following from this commonality of Calvin and Teresa, could we not say that religious experience is an accommodation to human participants and those others to whom the religious experiences are related? This is my contention when I write of divine madness: that God's accommodation of Self is a language which the Father, in the Spirit by means of the Incarnate Word, speaks to us. But this language of accommodation is not to be confused with the experience itself which includes the subjective biases and projections of the human recipient. For, the language of accommodation, I maintain, is the unmediated Trinity. It is He Who outpours yet withholds, Who shines yet eclipses, Who speaks yet lisps, Who categorizes the uncategorizable. Even through Christ, the Trinity is still the God Who theophanizes. It

⁴⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, vol 2, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 121.

is as if in mystical experience the Triune God was to speak from a burning bush (Ex 3:2), approach the prophet in a gentle wind (1 Kg 19:12), or reveal only His back, not His face (Ex 33:23).

Why do I insist that the language of accomodation is the unmediated Trinity? For Teresa, God is the Fount of life at the center of the soul⁴⁸ throughout the whole of the spiritual life. And yet, in a special way after mystical marriage, Teresa is able to maintain that the Trinity is within the soul by *presencia y por potencia y esencia*: "presence and by power and essence."⁴⁹ The Trinity is also active in the soul by grace, but not without an immanent presence.⁵⁰ In *Moradas* V:1:12 Christ is spoken of as able to pass through the form of the soul at will, like through the wall of the Upper Room. Regarding all of her mystical experiences, Teresa never infers that grace is like a *synaptic connection* allowing for contact between God and the soul. Again, Teresa refers to her mystical experiences as all arising from the Godhead: her raptures, her touches, her visions, her locutions, her levitations, except in two isolated instances which seem atypical for Teresa: (1) in *Moradas* VI:3:6 Teresa writes of locutions through the agency of angels in the name of God/Christ, but in *Moradas* VI:3:4 she notes only three agencies for locutions: God, Satan, or self-deception; (2) in *Vida* 29:13 Teresa describes her transverberation at the hand of an angelic figure, but notes that

⁴⁸ *Moradas* I:2:3.

⁴⁹ *Cuentas* 41 (49): 2 (1).

⁵⁰ *Cuentas* 66 (65): 10 (9).

there was an exchange made between God and the soul. It is not clear whether this angelic figure is to be appreciated in the biblical sense of an *Angel of the Lord*, an angelic-like representation of God, or whether the figure was an anthropomorphism of an angelic being acting on God's behalf. Teresa emphatically states that the Holy Spirit is the *medianero* ("mediator") facilitating communication between the Trinity and the mystic.⁵¹

2. Mystical Madness

Much madness is divinest sense/To a discerning eye;/Much sense the starkest madness.⁵²

In the Gospels we encounter the portrayal of Jesus as being mistaken as one "swept away in madness": *Quoniam in furorem versus est* (Mk 3:21); as possessed by a devil (Jn 8:48); and denounced as a "drunkard" (Lk 7:34). David, His forefather, is said to have prophesied as a naked ecstatic (1 Sm 19:18-24), at one point feigning lunacy (1 Sm 21:14), and whirled before the Ark of the Covenant stripped to a loincloth to earn a condemnation of buffoonery (2 Sm 6:20). In the Christ and in His kingly precursor -- both anointed in the Spirit -- we are exposed to a paradigm of *non-normal behavior*. The postures of both Jesus and David are paradigms for Teresa as she engages in *holy madness*.⁵³ It,

⁵¹ *Meditaciones* 5:5.

⁵² Emily Dickenson, "Much madness is divinest sense," *The Oxford Book of American Verse*, ed. F.O. Matthiessen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 159.

⁵³ Teresa, for example, recalls how Jesus was the butt of much mockery (*Camino* 32:8) by a world that thought Him crazed, and that David was swept up in the joy of the Holy Spirit (*Vida* 16:3).

therefore, remains for me to consider in what forms *holy madness* is manifested in a Teresian context. Hence, I will discuss this *madness* under two headings. First, "Classifications" is a section devoted to what I believe are 6 types of *holy madness* addressed by Teresa in her major works. Second, "*Holy Folly vs. Holy Madness*" is a subdivision set aside for clarifying distinctions between the two phenomena.

A. Classifications

Going to God goes beyond mental health.⁵⁴

Having examined at the outset the scriptural basis for *mad* behaviors, as well as having considered Teresa's and Washburn's notions of a-typical conduct and mood in the transforming/integrating person, it now remains for me to set *holy madness* to classification. In order to examine this apparent collection of *madness*-phenomena, it seems imperative not to rely solely upon Teresa and Washburn. To be more theologically and academically accurate in examining *holy madness*, the context of the broader Christian mystical tradition, as well as other spiritual and psychological commentators, should be consulted as well. If authentic, it would not be a collection of phenomena isolated to Teresa's experience and Washburn's theorizing.

Madness, in general, might be seen as those psychological defects in personality which encompass what commonly make up the

⁵⁴ Francis Gross Jr. and Toni Perior Gross, *The Making of a Mystic: Seasons in the Life of Teresa of Avila* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 188.

spectrum from neuroses to psychoses. This phenomenon more or less cripples the human personality, and more or less limits its effectiveness. In this sense, the average person is a bit mad, though some of us are characterized by it more than others. But how does *madness* in the life of the mystic differ from madness in general, or does it? *Holy Madness* in the mystical life would seem to mean *six* things:

(1) There is that psychological madness which precedes a state of conversion and serves to till the seedbed in which grace is to be planted. This sort of madness heightens the interior senses by making them anxious and increasing the level of vulnerability in the person. As it may be providentially employed by God in order to predispose the soul to the activity of grace, this *madness theologically* may be called *holy*. This madness phenomenologically may be a disequilibrium in the *natural* tension within the psyche, a tension due to repression of the shadow and its *contra-conventionalism*,⁵⁵ and compounded by a new found anxiety precipitated by an outside event. Together they lead to a sense of "disillusionment with and in the world."⁵⁶ Teresa, for example, discusses her paroxysm with convalescence, and a stirring of conscience through reading Osuna's *Third Spiritual Alphabet*, as the beginning of her turning towards God/Christ.⁵⁷ While Washburn

⁵⁵ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 132.

⁵⁶ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 174. See also *Ego*, 1st ed., 158.

⁵⁷ *Vida* 4: 6. Similarly, Ignatius of Loyola and Francis of Assisi experienced a spiritual malaise mixed with injury (Ignatius) or illness (Francis) and convalescence (both) which heightened their vulnerability to the grace of conversion. For a complete breakdown of equilibrium see the admitted psychosis of Margery Kempe which

generally focuses upon the *negative* conversion experience, he does acknowledge that there might be a more positive, "ambivalent fascination with nonegoic possibilities" which may also precipitate spiritual conversion.⁵⁸ Others also argue that this disequilibrium does not always have to be an existential angst; rather it may consist of *positive* intuitions that gently lift the consciousness outside of its usual self-oriented orb.⁵⁹ This was the case with Beatriz de la Madre de Dios, as mentioned by Teresa, who at the age of twelve read a book on St. Ann and from this Beatriz felt the desire to dedicate her life to religion.⁶⁰

(2) I believe that there is a psychological madness which is tolerated by God in the human psyche and which is not eradicated but preserved by grace, either for a protracted time or for the life-time of the mystic. Furthermore, by the influx of the energizing grace of the Spirit it is accentuated for prophetic reasons. Grace acts as an influx of energy in a defective machine in order to deliberately produce *wild* results for prophetic reasons. As this madness is sanctified in purpose it, theologically, may also be deemed *holy*. This *madness* does not have

preceded her conversion. Ignatius of Loyola, *Autobiografia, Obras Completas De San Ignacio De Loyola* (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, 1952), 31-37. Thomas of Celano, *The First Life of St. Francis*, trans. Placid Hermann, OFM, *Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St. Francis*, ed. Marion Habig (Chicago, IL: Franciscan Herald Press, 1972), 231. Margery Kempe, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, trans. B.A. Windeatt (Toronto, ON: Penguin Books Canada, 1985), 41.

⁵⁸ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 25.

⁵⁹ e.g. Donald Evans, "The Shift Into Inwardness," *The Yale Review* 2 (December 1977): 295.

⁶⁰ *Fundaciones* 26:6. In his time, Thomas Merton began the reading of Catholic books of systematic and mystical theology which in turn lead to his going to church, and then to his eventual conversion experience. Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1948), 175.

to be completely eradicated at the state of transforming union, though it might. Washburn insists that "integration is the end of *becoming* human and the beginning of *being* a complete human being,"⁶¹ and I might add a modifier, of a *psychologically complete* human being. Thus here, I might add the speculation that not everyone who reaches mystical union is necessarily psychologically integrated, nor that everyone who is psychologically integrated is necessarily in union with God.

But this does not mean that the mystic, even if not fully psychologically integrated, has not attained a high degree of moral excellence and a profound relationship with God. I appeal to Georg Feuerstein and his observations of *spiritual adepts*: holy fools and mystics, Eastern and Western:

As is apparent from the history of the mystical traditions and schools, both Eastern and Western, few mystics have succeeded in truly freeing themselves from the quagmire of their own psyche.⁶²

Similarly, Philip Sheldrake writes that the term, holiness, customarily has not been a synonym for complete soundness of mind, but rather, is a declaration of infused and acquired virtue. Furthermore, while wholeness of personality accompanies spiritual growth, it does so in a qualified sense.

Growth in holiness is not identical with the perfectly psychologically balanced person. It may be possible to see wholeness as of three kinds: the minimum necessary to function; a full human balance reached by a few and set as an ideal...; the perfect balance of human and

⁶¹ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 231.

⁶² Georg Feuerstein, *Holy Madness* (New York, NY: Arkana, 1990), 203.

transcendent qualities.⁶³

Feuerstein gives his reasons why a psychological integration is not achieved by all advanced mystics:

The personality of the adept is, to be sure, oriented toward self-transcendence rather than self-fulfilment. However, it is characteristically not on a self-actualizing trajectory...

Integration can occur either prior to enlightenment [union] or subsequently. If integration is not a conscious program of the preenlightened personality, it is also unlikely to form part of the post-enlightened personality, because of the relative stability of the psychic structures.⁶⁴

Francis and Toni Gross argue similarly, that Christian mystics have usually set about devoting themselves to a life of prayer and adoration without the intention of utilizing meditation for therapeutic reasons. It is precisely because of a different agenda from contemporary psychologists that Christian mystics have often arrived at union in somewhat of a broken fashion.⁶⁵ Viktor Frankl, as far as 1975, wrote that the purpose of organized religion was eschatological in focus even if it took notice of matters of mental health.

Although religion might secondarily promote such things as mental health and inner equilibrium, its aim does not primarily concern psychological solutions but, rather, spiritual salvation.⁶⁶

While the two -- salvation and psychological health --

⁶³ Philip Sheldrake, *Images of Holiness: Exploration in Contemporary Spirituality* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1988), 28.

⁶⁴ Feuerstein, *Holy Fools*, 243-244.

⁶⁵ Gross and Gross, *The Making of a Mystic*, 189.

⁶⁶ Viktor E. Frankl, *The Unconscious God* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1975), 74.

converge, it is academically, theologically and clinically erroneous to reduce one to the other.

Furthermore, Washburn acknowledges that full psychological integration is quite unusual:

Regrettably, integration is a developmental goal that is remote and only rarely achieved.⁶⁷

In the instance of Teresa, Sara Lehr Corry suggests that Teresa attained a state of self-actualization, but in *Teresa's terms* which depart, in some sense, from the standard understanding of self-actualization:

This "loving communication" with the Lord, this relationship with God that produces a soul that is beautiful and full of virtue and able to carry out God's will, is the epitome of life for Teresa, not emotional health or the accomplishments that accompany it. The soul that has reached the end of its journey has a magnificence of its own, but more magnificent is its clear view of the One Who dwells within and sustains it. This, for Teresa, is self-actualization.⁶⁸

Yet, this is not to say that the mystic who travels the way toward union is not generally tending toward psychological health and integration, as I believe that Teresa had and had done better than most. I suggest that neuroses (and even psychoses) in a religious context may be -- but not necessarily -- a prophetic mirror which the Spirit *allows* in order to hold the afflicted up to a world mad with its own illusions of sanity, virtue and propriety, and to deny such a possibility would in effect be stifling a spirit of prophecy: for the Holy Spirit is free as the wind is free (cf.

⁶⁷ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 293.

⁶⁸ Sara Lehr Corry, *Freedom of the Soul: Teresa of Avila and Self-Actualization* (M.A. Thesis: University of New Mexico, 1994), 58.

Jn 3:8), and is quite capable of turning *everything* to our good (cf. Rm 8:28). Teresa, herself, refers collectively in *Fundaciones* to several of the Carmelite nuns of Toledo whom Teresa personally found edifying for their dedication to mortification and obedience. Still, in part to substantiate their virtue, in part to caution others about over-zealousness, Teresa recalls the nuns' pronounced lack of judgment which made them quite dangerous to themselves (and potentially, to others). One of the nuns, as an example, was about to cast herself into a well *under obedience*, responding to a sarcastic remark suggesting the same.⁶⁹ Occurrences of this sort of *religious madness*, in varying degrees and duration, appear to be substantiated, for example, in the lives of Christina the Astonishing,⁷⁰ Francis of Assisi⁷¹ and Ignatius of Loyola.⁷²

⁶⁹ *Fundaciones* 16:3.

⁷⁰ Besides her mystical experiences, Christina was also noted for her public expressions of religious folly: her disdain of the human scent, her obsession with avoiding human contact by, for example, retreating to ovens or climbing trees. However so, these behaviors gave her spiritual credibility. John Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1980), 146.

⁷¹ Celano's account seems to suggest that Francis could have given in to an anorexia of a *holy sort*, and that this had led, for whatever reasons, to the edification of others. Francis would have been an anorexic, in part, according to the post-modern sense of the term, such that "the individual refuses to maintain a minimally normal body weight, is intensely afraid of gaining weight, and exhibits a significant disturbance in the perception of the shape or size of his or her body." Yet, there is nothing in Francis' accounts which would suggest that he was an anorexic because of an "intense fear [of] gaining weight or becoming fat": i.e. obsession over body image. It appears that Francis believed his body to be able to sustain more penance than his body was actually capable, and thus by self-misperception did not view himself too thin/weak to continue with great fastings. Celano, *The First Life of St. Francis*, 272-273. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed. (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 539-540. For further speculation on the phenomenon of *holy anorexia* see Rudolph M. Bell, *Holy Anorexia* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1985); and Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).

⁷² Ignatius' post-conversion, religiously obsessive period of scruples, suicidal ideation, exaggerated mannerisms and asceticism, had its prophetic quality. Their effect on his personality and social relations resulted in *magnetically* drawing early disciples to himself and hence to God, as well as strengthening Ignatius' own resolve. Ignatius of Loyola, *Autobiografia, Obras Completas*, Tomo I (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos,

(3) There are those psychological states which occur along the mystical path that are sporadic cross-overs into the psychotic/psychoticoid or the endurance of a somewhat sustained neurosis, without being locked in such states. These states, purely on a psychological level, are due to the surfacing of residual unconscious darkness into the consciousness of the person and the light of grace.⁷³ The release or purgation of the darkness cause temporary disengagements in the personality. These mad states are called *holy* when they contribute to the overall mystical thrust of the mystic. Their final results are the strengthening of the mystic's fundamental option, an advancement in depth of his/her moral life, and a further integration/actualization of the mystic's personality (whether or not the actualization is ultimately successful). All of this occurs so that the personality is more accommodated to union with God/Christ.⁷⁴ Washburn writes of varied kinds and instances of

1945), 159-179.

⁷³ Historically, the Catholic Church has accepted a number of "spirits" which could be instrumental in precipitating such states within the personality, for example, the Holy Spirit, demons, the self. One need only consult Auguste Poulain or Adolphe Tanquerey for the customary view. Auguste Poulain, *Des Grâces D'Oraison Traité De Théologie Mystique*, 11th ed. (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1931); and Adolphe Tanquerey, *Précis de Théologie Ascétique de Mystique*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Desclée et Cⁱ, 1924). For a more recent ecclesial statement on demonology consult, Sacred Congregation For Divine Worship, "Les formes multiples de la superstition," ("Christian Faith and Demonology"), *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Co., 1982), 456-485.

⁷⁴ Washburn argues that these incidents are "redemptive" in the natural sense of the word, as they may serve in liberating or delivering the true self. They can be seen to be natural expressions of human development as it arrives at the point of the transcendence of the [mental] ego." On the psychological level, one mark of mystics which distinguishes them from psychotics is that mystics are "seaworthy" and can "arrive safely at the other side of the sea" of psychic turbulence, "whereas the madman is not." R.D. Laing maintains that "the person going through ego-loss or transcendental experiences may or may not become in different ways confused. Then he might legitimately be regarded as mad. But to be mad is not necessarily to be ill, notwithstanding that in our culture the two categories have become confused." Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 157, 184. R.D. Laing, *The Politics of*

"regressions in the service of transcendence" which are properly *breakthroughs*, rather than *breakdowns* of personality.⁷⁵ Teresa warns of phenomena occurring during the mystical path which, when handled with prudence, are not the psychological threat they could be: manic-like experiences which could threaten physical death,⁷⁶ interior trials posing a real danger of insanity,⁷⁷ outright hallucinations,⁷⁸ enfeebling absorptions,⁷⁹ *derangement* due to the "pain" of lovesickness,⁸⁰ severe breaches of discretion,⁸¹ the setting in of melancholy,⁸² among others.⁸³ I have dealt with much of this sort of madness in the mystical transformation and

Experience and the Bird of Paradise (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1969), 113.

⁷⁵ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 155-185; *Ego*, 2nd ed., 171-202.

⁷⁶ *Moradas* VI:11:11.

⁷⁷ *Moradas* VI:1:14.

⁷⁸ *Moradas* IV:3:14.

⁷⁹ *Moradas* IV:3:11.

⁸⁰ *Camino* 19:11.

⁸¹ *Camino* 19:13.

⁸² *Fundaciones* 4:2.

⁸³ For other examples of these temporary cross-overs consider first Julian of Norwich with her episodic "raving": i.e., a fit a hysteria. Again, consider Thérèse of Lisieux with her childhood scruples, hysteria and purported demonically induced hallucinations, and latter phobias. One of these phobias was Thérèse's intense fear of spiders throughout her short religious life, being a preoccupation at times even on her bed of consumption. Furthermore, Ignatius of Loyola might have had an hysterical episode. Ignatius confessed that on one instance he had a "superabundance" of tears, rendering him speechless and causing him to fear loss of vision. Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, trans. Edmund Colledge, OSA and James Walsh, SJ (Toronto, ON: Paulist, 1978), 310-311. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Histoire D'une Âme* (Paris: Editions du Cerf et Desclée De Brouwer, 1972), 74-77. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Her Last Conversations*, trans. John Clarke, OCD (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1977), 96, 153. (I am referring to Clarke's translation, in spite of the superiority of the original language, since his edition is one of the more complete collections of Thérèse's conversations with her sisters etc.) Ignatius of Loyola, *Diario Espiritual, Obras Completas*, Tomo I (Madrid: Biblioteca De Autores Cristianos, 1947), 334.

psychological integration sections of this dissertation under regression,⁸⁴ and the possible risks of not passing through these *mad* states, but being trapped in them.

The path of perfecting is a "journey of conversion," according to Mark Searle. This passage through conversion is, on a psychological plane, a "journey through crisis": "moments of alarm and anxiety" and "moments of change." These crises involve "darkness and disorientation, occasionally a period of wild exhilaration."⁸⁵ I maintain, after Teresa and Washburn, that these crises are often marked by irruptions of the unconscious into conscious awareness. For the average person -- does this creature exist? -- these irruptions typically correspond to life-cycle changes (pre- to adolescence, to young adult, to middle age, to senior citizen).⁸⁶ While a *natural* process, these irruptions are still permeated with possibility by the Spirit for growth in personality *and* relationship with God. The irruptions or upheavals tend to represent the "bursting point" of a process of character development that has been long transpiring, but not recognizable to the ego.⁸⁷ For the more *psychically* or *spiritually* attuned, such

⁸⁴ In the case of Ignatius of Loyola's supposed hysterical episode, this would have occurred during an integrative-like period. I do not believe that anyone is so integrated in this life as not to allow for a temporary "reversal." But in the integrative stage, such a regression would, it seems, be without risk of ego-collapse and of a relatively short duration in comparison to derepressions in the regressive stage. See Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 45.

⁸⁵ Mark Searle, "The Journey of Conversion," *Worship* 54 (January 1980), 36, 39.

⁸⁶ Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 5, and elsewhere.

⁸⁷ Erich Neumann, *Art and the Creative Unconscious*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959), 153.

irruptions often do *not* correspond with biological life-cycle changes;⁸⁸ they break upon the mystically inclined person via the direct agency of the Spirit. They "lead one to enter the deepest recesses of hell as a terrible burden,"⁸⁹ guided as the individual is by the Spirit. In these persons, the unconscious and the collective unconscious of humanity is somehow purged of some of its darkness.

If we acknowledge that Christians seeking mystical union will eventually undergo a radical shift off center, of sanity off the ego and onto God, then we may make allowance for episodic *mental* disorders, i.e. irruptions, until this reorganization of the self is achieved (however desired by God or unimpeded by the mystic). Such occurrences force us to let go of our images of what sanity is. Even sanity must be laid down and so be taken up new in Trinity, otherwise it will remain a source of idolatry. As John of the Cross writes,

*El alma que quiere que Dios se le entregue todo, se ha de entregar toda, sin dejar nada para sí.*⁹⁰

Indiscretion has crept into the study or discussion of Christian spirituality. Eugene Kennedy believes that health (i.e., psychological equilibrium, which may actually represent an encrustment of the ego according to a Washburnian understanding) is

⁸⁸ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 184-185.

⁸⁹ Martin Israel, *The Pain That Heals: The Place of Suffering In The Growth Of The Person* (London: Mowbray, 1981), 74, 75.

⁹⁰ "The soul that desires God to give Himself over to it completely, must give itself over completely to Him, without keeping anything for itself." John of the Cross, *Dichos De Luz Y Amor: Avisos Y Dichos Atribuidos: Puntos De Amor*, (#127), 168.

the best indicator of an authentic spirituality: it is a sign of the Holy Spirit's efficacy in the life of the Christian.⁹¹ Such a notion evinces a heavy dose of elitism.⁹² These comments, unfounded, express criticism of the psychologically imperfect or non-normal Christian akin to the pharisees' judgments hurled at the man blind from birth (Jn 9:2). Kenneth Bakken and Kathleen Hofeller similarly maintain that

it is clear that Jesus considers healing central to His identity and to His mission.

Again,

Healing is the first fruit of the resurrection.

And again,

It is God's will that we be healthy and whole.⁹³

I maintain such principles are dangerously presumptuous in the context of pastoral theology and psychology, especially in the light of Jesus Who, in spite of the onslaught of the impoverished, warned that poverty will continue. That is, Jesus did not come to *make right* every condition in this present existence (cf. Jn 12:8). Healing was, in the scholastic sense, *accidental* to His mission/His being, even though vital to that same mission. In asserting that there are exceptions, that the Holy Spirit wills some Christians to bear either prophetic illnesses or incidental irruptions and

⁹¹ Eugene Kennedy, *Tomorrow's Catholics, Yesterday's Church: The Two Cultures of American Catholicism* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1988), xiv, 142.

⁹² Such elitist tendencies in the Church are not new. Consider 1 Cor 12:27-30.

⁹³ Kenneth Bakken and Kathleen Hofeller, *The Journey Toward Wholeness: A Christ-Centered Approach To Health And Healing* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1988), 6, ix, 57.

conflicts for greater pliability and conformity to the divine, does not mean that a cult of emotional despair, contrived eccentricity or mental illness is being advocated. I am not encouraging one to sustain a condition which is oppressive and preoccupying, and not liberating and reorienting.⁹⁴ Washburn acknowledges that the road of development to full-integration (and I will add, the road to union) is marked by disequilibrium and even desolations:

Ego transcendence requires a *deconstruction* of the basis of dualism and a return of the ego to the nonegoic core [of self].⁹⁵

Josef Goldbrunner himself acknowledges "'legitimate maladies' in the striving after holiness." Goldbrunner holds that there are maladies which result from the tension between the *upward* pull of spiritual creativity and the *downward* pull of original sin.⁹⁶

(4) There are those supranormal/supernatural/transpersonal or peak encounters which are analogous to psychotic behavior/disease, and which at first glance are perceived by those who are non-mystical bystanders as being symptomatic of psychological illness.⁹⁷ Of these encounters we may include

⁹⁴ See *Fundaciones* 7 wherein Teresa maintains the need to fight melancholy when it becomes a chronic and debilitating condition.

⁹⁵ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 16. Italics are mine.

⁹⁶ Goldbrunner is specifically addressing "physical collapse" in the course of spiritual advance. Yet, from our present understanding of psyche and body, many physical illnesses are not etiologically physical. Hence, we may proceed to the conclusion that some psychical disturbances are also normal in the course of personality and moral development, and reorientation to divinity. Josef Goldbrunner, *Holiness is Wholeness* (London: Burns & Oates, 1955), 3.

⁹⁷ Maslow would term those who disparaged peak experiences as "non-peakers." It is the "completely rational or 'materialistic' or mechanistic" or "compulsive-obsessive" who "tend to become a non-peaker. Coming from such a limited view of life, the non-peaker tends to regard his peak- and transcendent experiences as a kind of insanity, a complete loss of control, a sense of being overwhelmed by irrational emotions, etc." Such non-

locutions, visions, tears, ecstasies, enstasies and so forth which have occurred so often in the life of Teresa and other Christian mystics, too many to recount here. These peak-experiences occur both during Washburn's first half of regeneration/Underhill's illumination, and Washburn's second half of regeneration and integration/Underhill's unitive state. For the mystic this entails a sort of "expansion." Mystics undergo an expansion in their *awareness* of the universe and their "final cause" (namely, Godhead). The outcome of these experiences is a "transformation and sanctification of character." The schizophrenic undergoes an *analogous* "expansion," a "limitless expansion of the ego" (with a breakdown of self) resulting in a condition where "all sense of values is lost."⁹⁸ To explain this *type of religious madness* simply, I need only borrow from Karl Stern:

Something which is phenomenologically abnormal is not necessarily pathological. It may be supra-normal.⁹⁹

(5) For our consideration, there is the resultant and persisting state following transformative union, which Washburn calls integration, presumably which is marked by Maslow's B-values,

peakers "desperately hang on to stability." They might also be thought as "practical" or "means-oriented." As a result, these non-peakers are very judgmental of others who regularly have peak experiences. Stern explains the situation with a slightly different emphasis, "When it comes to the life of the spirit, our concept of normalcy breaks down because it is a concept of conformity, or the *juste milieu*...The saints move outside the *juste milieu* and belong to what well-integrated bourgeois people call the *lunatic fringe*." Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values and Peak-Experiences* (Toronto, ON: Arkana, 1994), 22-23. Stern, *The Third Revolution*, 161.

⁹⁸ R.C. Zaehner, *Mysticism: Sacred and Profane* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967), 100, 105.

⁹⁹ Stern, *The Third Revolution*, 159.

(*being-values*),¹⁰⁰ and is also noted for its excess, hence its *absurd* or *mad* quality. The unified or unified-integrated mystic is characterized by excess as in transcending rational and emotional limits, existing in what might be thought of as a state of philosophical or existential absurdity.¹⁰¹ Washburn notes, for example, that

these persons are so utterly devoted to spirit that they are most willing to sacrifice their own individual lives if doing so would contribute to the growth of humanity's collective life in Spirit.¹⁰²

Or again,

Saintly love is a love that recognizes no limits and accepts no compromises.¹⁰³

On the other hand, ego-dominated, *rational* minds rely on pre-established limits beyond which they will not/cannot commit themselves to further involvement or activity. Such persons *draw lines* in relation to the perceived demands of God and religion: they rationalize, then circumscribe. The non-ego-centered who are in union not only have access to many or all of the B-values of

¹⁰⁰ Maslow insists that the self-actualized person is *meta-motivated* by more altruistic grounds. Maslow gives these as: "truth, goodness, beauty, wholeness, dichotomy-transcendence, aliveness, uniqueness, perfection, necessity, completion, justice, order, simplicity, richness, effortlessness, playfulness, self-sufficiency." Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences*, 92-94. See also Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (New York, NY: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968), 78.

¹⁰¹ A philosophical or existential absurdity is a manner of existence which thoroughly appreciates the world as a condition of illusion and delusion; and that love in some sense is vain, for not everyone is receptive to acts of selfless love. Regardless of illusion, delusion and rejection of love, the mystic loves and loves excessively. As Albert Camus writes about Jesus Who, Camus momentarily postulates, discovers that His death is pointless: *Il est l'homme-parfait, étant celui qui a réalisé la condition la plus absurde*: "He is the perfect man, being the one who realized the condition of the greatest absurdity." Albert Camus, *Le Mythe De Sisyphe* (Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1942), 146.

¹⁰² Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 231.

¹⁰³ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 316.

Maslow, but use them in excess. Thus, we have the likes of Teresa and her relentless drive to found monasteries of nuns and sponsor numerous monasteries of friars.¹⁰⁴

I sought a clarification from Washburn over his remarks in *Transpersonal Psychology* that "the integrated person does not act from *spiritual excess*,"¹⁰⁵ Washburn's reply was the following:

I think you [Donald] are right about excess. Any difference we have is a difference in which word to use. I agree that the integrated mystic exceeds conventional and rational norms in certain respects, acting out of promptings and intuitions of the heart rather than just considerations of the head or conventions of society. This exceeds conventional and rational norms in the sense of no longer needing them rather than in the sense of being superior to them... This excess of surpassing, however as you say is not an excess of wildness, much less violence...¹⁰⁶ If anything, it goes in the other direction: an excess of unbounded gentleness, of uncompromising love. The reason why I don't use the word *excess* is because I reserve that word for ecstatic

¹⁰⁴ Consider also, each in their time, Simone Weil who starves herself in solidarity with the poor of France (which does not infer that Weil could not have reached a mind-body integration before laying it down for that which she valued as more vital); or John Vianney who spends most of the day and night hearing confessions. In her own right, Thérèse of Lisieux foretasted this integrative excess, when she makes her mystically offering to Love prior to the onset of her spiritual darkness: *O Jésus, mon Amour... ma vocation, enfin je l'ai trouvée, MA VOCATION, C'EST L'AMOUR!*... "O Jesus, my Love... my vocation, finally I have found it; MY VOCATION, IT IS LOVE!..." And the virtue of spiritual excess was promoted by Catherine of Siena for those pursuing the spiritual life: "It befits us to love God without moderation, putting to that love neither limit nor measure nor rule, but loving Him unmeasurably." Thérèse of Lisieux, *Histoire D'un Âme* (Paris: Éditions Du Cerf, 1972), 222. Catherine of Siena, *Saint Catherine of Siena as Seen in Her Letters*, trans. Vida D. Scudder (New York, NY: E.P. Dutton, 1906), 26.

¹⁰⁵ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 317.

¹⁰⁶ E-mailing Washburn first with my queries, I made it clear that I did not believe the transformed mystic to be one excessive in the sense of "destructive, unbridled or uncontrollable; but excessive in the sense of all-giving or all-being." This is the context for which Washburn uses the word *violent*: in contrast to destructive behaviors etc. Yet, I do not deny the mystic violent behaviors which may be *constructive*, to be distinguished from violent *destructive* behaviors. Violence, on the part of God in rapture for example, as we have seen in Teresa's life was highly constructive. So, if God uses violence, why not the mystic in union with that Self-same Source of *righteous* violence? This is a point raised by Feuerstein who discusses adepts who purposely "provoke a deep spiritual crisis in the disciple" using quite forceful methods. Donald Blais to Michael Washburn, E-mail message (November 20, 1994). Feuerstein, *Holy Madness*, 247.

states."¹⁰⁷

One form of excessiveness or eccentricity in the unified mystic (more or less integrated) is what is perceived by others as *amorality*. It seems -- in kind -- that the mystic imitates the *ruthless amorality* he/she experiences in God/Christ.¹⁰⁸ As Georg Feuerstein writes,

The God Who transcends space-time also transcends the moral realm;¹⁰⁹

while Scripture reminds us that

*Que dicit se in ipso manere, debet, sicut ille ambulavit, et ipse ambulare.*¹¹⁰

Thus, the issue of morality among transformed mystics has been raised by a series of moral theologians. For example, James Horne records and comments on the criticisms of Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, Martin Buber and Arthur Danto, and includes his own reservations.¹¹¹ As Horne notes,

There is the judgment made by moral theologians that "mysticism fails in its realization of the moral, social, and historical dimensions of life, and that it causes men to neglect their obligations."

According to Horne mysticism, in this sense, may be said to be

¹⁰⁷ Michael Washburn to Donald Blais, E-mail message (November 20, 1994).

¹⁰⁸ Jesus proclaimed that He was outside the Law, outside of morality, not its subject, in declaring that He was the "Lord of the Sabbath." (Mt 12:8). Again consider Teresa's rape-analogous raptures initiated, according to Teresa, by Trinity, which seem to defy our (and even 16th century Spanish) notions of propriety and decency.

¹⁰⁹ Feuerstein, *Holy Madness*, 238.

¹¹⁰ 1 Jn 2:6: "Whoever says that he remains in Him [Jesus], is bound to proceed himself just as He [Jesus] Himself proceeded."

¹¹¹ James R. Horne, *The Moral Mystic, SR Supplements* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983).

amoral.¹¹² Georg Feuerstein points out that the primary concern of the mystic (Eastern or Western) is "the vertical ideal of liberation from the conditioning of the body-mind" and union with "the ultimate good -- the transcendental Being." Feuerstein further acknowledges that the mystic's attention is not primarily placed upon personal or social integration.¹¹³ The mystical path is not extrinsically utilitarian. Like the oil poured over the head of Jesus (Mk 14:4-9), it has its own intrinsic worth and justification. Yet, Jesus did not wish our coming-to-moral-perfection to transpire in a vacuum: at one point He speaks of being present when one has gathered with the company of others (Mt 18:20). Nor is the mystic without *some* sort of social responsibility, even if only intercessory (paradigmatically, see Lk 2:37). The transformed Teresian mystic treasures the vertical over the horizontal, but not because of ego-centrism. Rather, it is due to the union's profundity, its next-life permanence, and the *Other* with Whom one is united. The Christian Scriptures remind us that the first commandment of the Christian is to love God, *not* neighbor; the love of neighbor proceeds from the love of God (Mt 22:36-40) and manifests it (1 Jn 3:17). Furthermore, we are reminded of the risk of losing ourselves in trying to save the world (Mk 8:36). The degree to which the transformed mystic re-immerses him/herself into society and its concerns is based partly on God's desires for the mystic, and partly upon the stamina of the

¹¹² Horne, *The Moral Mystic*, 26, 2.

¹¹³ Feuerstein, *Holy Madness*, 245.

vertical union and its *survival-threshold* among horizontal involvement. This attentiveness to preservation of the transformative union¹¹⁴ is not ego-centric -- or "self-preoccupied" to the point of being "offensively smelly," as Horne describes Niebuhr's estimation of "pure" mystics¹¹⁵ -- since the concern is not placed on self, but rather the pleasure of the Beloved Lover. Since the mystic path has very little practicality and minute economic or political relevance according to an ego-centric-based morality, Teresian mysticism may be said to be *amoral*. While Teresa of Avila insisted that Martha (the *active* life) and Mary (the *contemplative* life) must walk together¹¹⁶ such that she was quite active in the Spanish Reform, Teresa enjoined her daughters/sisters to love of *immediate* neighbor (those inside the monastery) through corporal works of mercy,¹¹⁷ and *extended* neighbor (those outside the monastery) through intercessory prayer:¹¹⁸

*Dejado que en la oración ayundaréis mucho no queráis aprovechar a todo el mundo, sino a las que están en vuestra compañía.*¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ I maintain that transformative union still needs solicitude as even Satan, in all his glory, could fail in his union with God. In *Moradas* VII:2:3, Teresa writes, *No se quiere apartar El de ella*: "He does not wish to be separated from her [the soul]."

¹¹⁵ Horne, *The Moral Mystic*, 14, 5.

¹¹⁶ *Moradas* VII:4:12; see also VII:1:8-9.

¹¹⁷ *Moradas* V:3:12; VII:4:14.

¹¹⁸ *Moradas* VII:4:14; VII:1:4.

¹¹⁹ "Leaving aside [the notion] that by prayer you will be assisting much, you need not be desiring to be of use to the whole world, but be [useful] to those in your company." *Moradas* VII:4:14.

The transformed mystic, from the perspective of those bound to marketplace, is amoral as to social duty, more or less, depending upon the degree to which transhistoricity and historicity intersect and are integrated into the life and ministry of the mystic. Charges of amorality (or even immorality) are sometimes based upon the degree of materialistic utility which the mystic's ministry is judged to have. (Negative valuation increases in degree as selflessness and otherworldliness increase, for example.) Jesus' conquering of the world (Jn 16:33) was not manifested in becoming Lord of historical kingdoms (Mt 4:8-9) or in becoming the King of social prosperity (Jn 6:15); conquering consisted in living out His union with the Father via a perfect conformity with the Father's Will (Jn 5:30b). Despite what has been said, truly transformed mystics cannot relish in a state of union at the expense of their neighbors placed on their path (to be distinguished from neighbors to be sought-out). In parallel, one may recall the condemnation of Jesus in the parable over the priest and the levite. These *holy* men, it was said, walked around the Samaritan lying in the road bleeding and bruised in order to preserve their ritual purity (Lk 10:29-37). Even so, *specialization* is not precluded among the self-actualized. Some may attend to contemplation with more liberty, while others correspondingly attend to the action to which contemplative-actualized persons are not attending.¹²⁰

There is, in actuality, an intrinsic amorality or non-morality about the authentic mystic. Washburn, for example, notes that the

¹²⁰ Washburn, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 116, 117, 118.

psychologically integrated being moves past the stage of horror over the sins of others, and then beyond over-exaggerating others' potential for good, to a state of *realism*: other persons are valued as "primarily 'good'" but also "limited beings."¹²¹

Theologically, by transforming union the mystic, in principle, has substantially realized the moral ideal of St. Paul, whereby the spirit takes great precedence over the letter (2 Cor 3:6). It is a higher morality which often appears immoral to more *letter-oriented* moralists. Without departing from the *realism* of Washburn, the mystic unified with the Source of created goodness and beauty can metaphorically fix on the treasure in a field spread with manure (cf Mt 13:44) -- i.e. be amazed over what beauty there is in a rather deplorable situation or person, even be momentarily oblivious to the deplorableness present. This is taken by the *lettered* as condoning the deplorableness rather than transcending it. The unified mystic, as such, acts much like the child said to be able to walk over a cobra's den without danger to his/her innocence or interior peace (cf. Is 11:8). Thus Teresa, for example, cannot but delight wholeheartedly in the crafted flight of her nuns from the intrusiveness of the Princess of Eboli when recalling the incident, and does not focus on -- *nor deny* -- the humiliations or injustices which dominated the situation.¹²²

The transformed mystic is so rooted in union with God as to see His spark virtually anywhere which God chooses to reveal its presence.

¹²¹ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 296-297.

¹²² *Fundaciones* 17:17.

(If God was not present in the most inordinate situations, such situations would not exist.) Accordingly, Maslow points out that the self-actualized may be viewed by the more "practical" as "inciting" them "to emulation:"¹²³ i.e. the *practical* might see themselves invited to callousness to suffering, to classism, or to a subservient tolerance of injustice, for example, in the instance of Teresa's response to her royal nemesis. And yet, where the *lettered* would dismiss something as a minute moral infraction, the transformed mystic may be horrified at the potential danger in wilfully tolerating such infractions. The mystic might preemptively strike at the root viciousness at work in such a person, and confront it with divine-like wrath (paradigmatically, see Mt 16:23) -- and here is the *critical criterion* - *without judging or questioning the person's worth*. Thus Washburn's *realism* of the integrated is preserved and applicable to the unified mystic. Teresa, as an example, had no qualms about severely upbraiding her brother, Lorenzo, by letter over his misguided devotion which subsequently resulted in his making a poorly thought-out vow.¹²⁴ In parallel, the same Jesus Who could bless children (Mt 19:13-15) could also thrash the temple marketers (Jn 2:13-17).

In his discussion of the personality of Teresa of Avila,

¹²³ The mystical experiences which integrated mystics encounter, and the virtues and the degree to which mystics manifest them, may also be perceived by the egoist as mentally disturbed. Comparatively, Maslow makes a point that self-actualized persons are often misunderstood. Their contemplative approach to the world is usually perceived as inactivity; their "unconditional acceptance" towards all creatures and situations may be misunderstood as unreachable expectations; and their "over-estheticism" of seeing only the good in everything and everyone is misunderstood as endorsing the ugly and the disordered." Maslow, *Toward A Psychology of Being*, 123, 124, 113, 116, 117.

¹²⁴ *Carta* 167: 12. (January 2, 1577; To Lorenzo)

Laurence Nixon proceeds to define *non-normalcy* as parallel to but not intersecting with pathological behavior.

Hypersensitivity is a potential either for creativity, mystical personality transformation or mental illness, but it is not synonymous with the last-named.

Nixon points out that mystics (unified or not) often have an eccentric demeanor which

suggests dysfunctionality, yet this must be viewed as dysfunctional in the sense of rejecting societal values...

It must be kept in mind that these Spirit-activated persons are not hampered by their inner surges of energy,

but are able to harness this emotional energy and progress through a series of developmental stages, ultimately arriving at a new synthesis of personality.¹²⁵

For the unified mystic such *eccentricity* would be a *relative eccentricity*. I maintain this eccentricity's relative status, since Washburn points out the behaviors of the integrated are due neither to "disconcerting" nor "overpowering" "influxes of nonegoic life." Yet, these behaviors remain vibrant (and idiosyncratic to the mind of the ego-centric) since they are fed with the life of the Dynamic Ground, on a psychological level.¹²⁶ Furthermore, I must insist this eccentricity's negative perception is accentuated

¹²⁵ Laurence Nixon, "Maladjustment and Self-actualization in the Life of Teresa of Avila," *Studies in Religion* 18 (#3 1989), 286, 295. Thomas Aquinas' argument on auxiliary evil caused by a good agent may be applied here to further explain the *odd* behaviorisms of Christian mystics induced by the Trinity: *Malum ex bono causatur per accidens, tum ex parte materiae effectus; tum ex parte formae ipsius. Si enim materia sit indisposita ad recipiendam impressionem agentis, necesse est defectum sequi in effectu...*; that is, "Evil may be caused accidentally by good, either on the part of the matter or the form of the effect. Indeed, if the matter [object acted upon] is indisposed to receiving the agent's [good] impression, there will be, necessarily, a defective effect." *Thomas Aquinas, Summa Contra Gentiles* (Rome: Casa Editrice Marietti, 1946): III:X, 236.

¹²⁶ Washburn, *Transpersonal Psychology*, 297.

when there is an inability to translate and extend such energies into a social setting, society resisting these impulses by reason of its own dysfunctionality.

(6) At this point I would like to provide a sixth category of *holy madness*, a category not provided for by Washburn: the category of *victim madness*, as suggested in these words of Meister Eckhart:

The will to suffer comes of love; the will not to suffer comes of want of love [unlove]. I much prefer, and it is better and more useful to me, to love God and be sick, rather than to be sound of body and not love God.¹²⁷

Such notions as Eckhart's *victimhood theology* would have found its justification in Paul's experience of being able to vicariously participate in Christ's redeeming act in a visceral manner:

*Qui nunc gaudeo in passionibus pro vobis, et adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi, in carne mea pro copore eius, quod est Ecclesia.*¹²⁸

This phenomenon is absent from Washburn's schema. Victimhood, though intersecting mystical development, is not primarily developmental; its purpose remains purely sacrificial in nature.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Meister Eckhart, *The Book of Divine Comfort*, (*Works of*) Meister Eckhart, trans. Raymond B. Blakney (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1941), 71.

¹²⁸ "Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and in my flesh[ly nature] am taking away what is wanting in Christ's passion, for His Body, which is the Church." I translate *carne* as *fleshly nature*, since if Jerome and his descendants felt Paul meant the body proper and not our earth-boundedness, *corpus* would have been used to designate both Paul's body and Christ's mystical Body, and not just the latter. Col 1:24.

¹²⁹ Washburn's transpersonal model allows for contingencies (e.g., taxes, death of loved ones etc.) arising within the individual's psycho-spiritual drama. But his paradigm cannot provide for any or all particular contingencies, precisely because contingencies are contingent, not absolute prerequisites. Again, mystical victimhood is not universally mystical; it is largely a Catholic (Roman and sometimes Orthodox and Anglo-Catholic) phenomenon, to be further distinguished from an intercessory posture on behalf of others. Furthermore, it is soteriologically-oriented (i.e. oriented around the salvation of others) and not union/integration-oriented. What is understood by Washburn as prerequisite to this dramatic unfolding of the human personality, is a "triphasic view" of human existence, of passing from a "preegoic stage" through an "egoic stage" through/to a "transegoic

Teresa, herself, recognizes this sort of *religious insanity* in Beatriz of the Incarnation, a fellow member of Teresa's reform. Beatriz believed herself called to take on the pain of *universal negation*¹³⁰ as a substitutionary sacrifice to bring about the conversion of a group of hardened sinners.¹³¹ Such notions would have hardly been foreign to Teresa, familiar as she was with the 14th century, St. Catherine of Siena.¹³² Victimhood is further *implied* in Teresa's admitted thirst to offer herself to Christ via

stage" in which human fulfillment can/ought to be reached and sustained. That victimhood is not prerequisite, we should note, as an example, Ignatius Loyola's mysticism. It is a mysticism (as found in his *Diary*) in which a sense of substitutionism is characteristically absent. Washburn, *Ego*, 2nd ed., 5.

¹³⁰ *Universal* in the sense of demonic forces, the pain of the collective unconscious, upsurges of Beatriz's personal shadow, the psychic and/or physical pain of the sinners for whom she substituted herself, among other negations.

¹³¹ *Fundaciones* 12:3ff. Beatriz's condition bore some semblance with conversion and pain disorders. Yet, if Teresa is correct in her recounting of the situation, then what might better explain Beatriz's symptomatology is contrasting it with Washburn's *pranic explosions*. Washburn maintains these *pranic explosions* may occur through derepressions in the regressive state: "a flow of energy in the body which, in encountering impediments to its circulation, gives rise to unusual bodily sensations and reactions." The difference is that *victimhood* may be likened to an *implosive* activity. Victimhood is an implosion of extrinsic and intrinsic energies, light and dark mixed, within the core of the person's being. Reverberations are felt throughout the whole of the person, often to its corporal, and often but not necessarily moral, well-being. Anecdotal-like, in my contact with various Christian contemplatives, I have noted instances where victimhood is spiritually corrosive, or at least there are spiritual weaknesses involved therein: attachment, pride, suicidal-ideation, despair, exasperation, intense anger with God, intense feelings of humiliation. *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th ed., 452-462. *Ego*, 1st ed., 179.

¹³² *Vida* 22:7. In *The Dialogue*, Catherine relates what she believed to be the voice of Christ discussing her *victimhood*: "You ask Me for suffering to atone for the offenses My creatures commit against Me. ..." Catherine's atonement *clearly* involved victimhood, since Catherine had asked for extrinsic suffering to be heaped upon her. Other historical personages known for their quite explicit *victim theology* were Marguerite-Marie Alacoque and Thérèse of Lisieux. Marguerite (17th century) wrote of herself that God *voulait se rendre le maître absolu de mon coeur, et qu'il voulait me rendre en tout conforme à sa vie souffrante...*: "He wished to show Himself the absolute Master of my heart, and to render me in complete conformity to His life [vocation] of suffering." In doing so, Marguerite would function as *un canal pour les répandre selon mes desseins dans les âmes...*: "a channel in order to spread [grace] according to My designs for souls..." Thérèse (19th century) prayed to Christ, *C'est ma faiblesse même qui me donne l'audace de m'offrir en Victime à ton Amour, ô Jésus!*: "It is my frailty which gives me the audacity to offer myself as Victim to your Love, O Jesus!" Catherine of Siena, *The Dialogue*, trans. Suzanne Noffke, OP (Toronto, ON: Paulist, 1980), 29. Marguerite-Marie Alacoque, *Autobiographie, Vie et Oeuvres De La Bienheureuse Marguerite-Marie Alacoque*, Tome Deuxième (Paris: Ancienne Librairie Poussielgue, 1915), 34, 35. Thérèse of Lisieux, *Histoire D'Un Âme*, 223.

prayer and penance with the desire to prevent the loss of souls.¹³³

MacNutt reminds us of the "long tradition of redemptive suffering" as a viable exception to the rule of tending toward mind-body health. He asserts that this tradition ought not to be shamefully dismissed

by those who like to see things in simple terms of black and white -- of the devil and sickness completely on one side and God and health on the other side.¹³⁴

The *madness* involved here not only includes the extrinsic darkness taken from outside one's self and brought upon the self, but one's mental and spiritual anguish in bearing such intense interior and exterior pain with various mental and physical maladies, the turbulent responses in one's mannerisms due to such anguish, and the transcendence or neglect of one's base needs involved in substitution for others who remain unknowing of or ungrateful for the substitution. The closest which Washburn is able to approach this phenomenon is "saintly compassion" which Washburn assigns to the state of integration. This involves profound self-sacrifice on the behalf of others, predominantly in temporal ways.¹³⁵ Yet substitution differs from *saintly compassion* in these ways: (1) it may occur during any stage in the spiritual life, the substitution progressively being perfected in love when a willing

¹³³ *Fundaciones* 1:7, 8. Still this should be qualified: Teresa's increasing desire to suffer is primarily directed towards reparation and solidarity with Christ Crucified. Reparation does not of its nature require substitution; reparation is concerned with *making amends* for the world's insults against the dignity of God/Christ. Again, Teresa is preoccupied with intercession on behalf of the good of others. *Moradas* VI:4:15, 16; VII:4:15.

¹³⁴ Francis MacNutt, OP, *Healing* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974), 86.

¹³⁵ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 231.

substitution;¹³⁶ (2) substitution may occur against one's will at least in part¹³⁷ since Jesus, ultimately, may dispose any member of His Mystical Body as He sees fit; (3) it is always at the expense of one's corporate integrity, whereas Washburn's *compassion* need not be; (4) this *madness* involves not only the *fiat* of substitution when given, but all the anguish involved and the weight of *universal negation*; and (5) this could conceivably terminate one's life before union or integration may even occur.¹³⁸

In all these forms of *holy madness* there is an *analogousness* with mental illness but not a complete identification with it. One or more elements are missing from *holy madneses* which prevent us from making a diagnosis of neuroses or psychoses plain and simple in the accepted understanding of mental illnesses as based on the notion of maladaptation,¹³⁹ and/or according to my definitions above.¹⁴⁰ Whether or not the mystic momentarily steps into a period of maladaptation (and not always without risk), or is

¹³⁶ Both Alacoque and Thérèse were victims at the onset of their transformative journey.

¹³⁷ *Fundaciones* 12:5.

¹³⁸ I say this in view of the very short lives of several victim souls, namely Sts. Bernadette Soubirous, Gemma Galgani and Thérèse of Lisieux.

¹³⁹ Maladaptation is viewed as a symptom of mental distress. Adaptation is considered a symptom of mental health. See Arthur S. Reber, *The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology* (Toronto, ON: Penguin Books, 1985), s.v. "Maladaptive." Robert W. White, PhD and Norman F. Watt, PhD, *The Abnormal Personality*, 4th ed. (New York, NY: The Ronald Press, 1973), 90-94.

¹⁴⁰ Even the simple use by God of mental illness for a religious end is sufficient to distinguish that madness from madness without a religious reference. I should note here that those schizophrenics who have religious delusions, and are not drawn towards traditional ascetical and mystical life, should not be classified with holy madness, since theirs is a perversion of religiosity. Theirs involves a false inflation of the ego, rather than shifting the center of power off the ego through the manipulation of religious symbols, as in imaginary visions or locutions.

burdened with a chronic condition, the usual direction is toward a better degree of adaptation as the outcome. Thus the mystical path also follows, it would seem, the path of integration. As it tends toward integration, the mystical path is not rigid, but adjusted to one's personal needs (and God's wants). There is one exception, that of *victimhood*, which may intersect at any point, or *color* the whole of the individual mystical path. Still, such a *madness* as *victimhood* ought not to be construed as a necessary part of mystical development, in general, but should be viewed as contingent and auxiliary.

B. Holy Folly vs. Holy Madness

The development of consciousness in [the human] may not necessarily entail the development of what would be called a *normal*, *well-adjusted*, or *self-sufficient* personality.¹⁴¹

But how do these six notions of *madness* fit in with Paul's concept, as already discussed, of the Christian as being a fool for Christ (1 Cor 4:10; 3:18)? Is there a distinction between the *madness* found in the tradition of the holy fool and the *madness* of the mystic?

Georg Feuerstein in *Holy Madness* maintains that there was a tradition in the Christian Church up through about the seventeenth century, and largely Eastern, which was properly call *holy folly*. The vocation of going about as a holy fool was essentially a role dependent upon an ascetical athleticism and fostered eccentricity, with the intention of inviting opprobrium. This asceticism

¹⁴¹ Jacob Needleman, "Psychiatry and the Sacred," *Consciousness: Brain, States of Awareness, and Mysticism*, ed. Daniel Goleman and Richard J. Davidson (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1979), 211.

included the deliberate feigning of madness. Holy folly, as such, was a highly specialized understanding of Paul's notion of *fool for Christ*.¹⁴² It was a vocation focused on the *conversion of manners*, whereby the fool seeks interior illumination and spiritual freedom by self-imposed exaggerated and socially unacceptable behaviors, and the acceptance of external condemnation and hostility. According to John Seward, holy folly is both a "charisma" and a phenomenon which is "simulated." That is, by the prompting of God, the religious fool "plays at being mad" as an other-worldly religious discipline. For example, St. Simeon Salus (d. 590) is said to have gone about dragging a dead dog behind him in order to appear insane to the populace.¹⁴³

Even so, there is an affinity between the *madness* of holy folly and the religious madness of Teresa of Avila. Teresa, at one point, views herself in the company of King David being ridiculed for his conduct before the Ark of the Covenant.¹⁴⁴ While Teresa does not feign madness as the Christian fools or as David -- while she does not set out to manifest a pretence of madness for the sake of humility -- nonetheless she is perceived by contemporaries as being mad. Teresa's simple living of the Gospel caused her to be subject to such perceptions. For example, when Teresa sets out to establish the Monastery of St. Joseph in Medina

¹⁴² Feuerstein, *Holy Madness*, 8-14, 205. See also Donald Blais, OCDS *Eutrapelia: The Dynamics of Divine and Human Playfulness* (M.A. Thesis: University of St. Michael's College, 1993), 146-155.

¹⁴³ John Seward, *Perfect Fools: Folly for Christ's Sake in Catholic and Orthodox Spirituality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 25, 29, 19. For further information on holy folly see Blais, *Eutrapelia*, 146-155.

¹⁴⁴ *Fundaciones* 27:20.

del Campo, her accusers do not hesitate to bandy about the word, "insane."¹⁴⁵ But is there a difference between the eccentricity of the holy fool and the eccentricity of the mystic?

The *madness* of the mystic, is in part, due to his/her regular shunning of

the ordinary standards of daily existence. These are men and women who have turned their attention away from conventional pursuits and toward the spiritual Reality.¹⁴⁶

But, unlike the holy fool, the mystic *per se* does not of necessity have either the severe call to public self-abasement for the sake of "self-surrender to the larger Reality," or the severe call to prophetic witness.¹⁴⁷ If there is holy folly present, it is because of a charism or condition of *madness* due to regular personal encounter with God, which finds overt expression in mannerisms not in accord with the standard norms of the day. This mad condition arises from a fundamental change in the moral and psychological structure of the mystic, as orchestrated by Christ. The attendant mannerisms would not be of a conscious deliberation as they would be symptomatic of a spiritual disposition. But, the *madness* of the fool and the *madness* of the mystic can be said to intersect when each becomes integrated. It is here that, according to Washburn,

the integrated person cares little if he looks foolish or clumsy by prevailing standards just so long as his

¹⁴⁵ *Fundaciones* 3:3.

¹⁴⁶ Feuerstein, *Holy Madness*, 125.

¹⁴⁷ Feuerstein, *Holy Madness*, 205.

actions embody what he truly thinks and feels.¹⁴⁸

Maslow similarly contends that rationality and irrationality become integrated in the more self-actualized person. In so doing, irrationality may actually add a virtuous quality to such an actualized person.

Furthermore, we imply an integration of rationality and irrationality with the consequence that irrationality may, in its place, also be considered healthy, desirable or even necessary.¹⁴⁹

This *untamed, primitive* -- even pristine or raw -- quality, is possible in the actualized person because, according to Maslow,

the impulses are more expressed and less controlled; the controls are less rigid, inflexible, anxiety-determined;¹⁵⁰

That is, characteristic of the actualized is a behavior or reflex which is more *real* or authentic and less socially contrived. An exception to this is the self-permission to contrive when such contrivance serves a *missionary purpose*; i.e. when it is prophetic, or when contrivance is employed to preserve one's *ministry* from attackers. As to the latter, in 1575 Teresa herself curbs her display of apostleship and *accepts* a temporary encloistering, a *house-arrest* (or as Teresa maintains, a confinement in "prison"). Teresa takes this step in order to preserve her Reform from irate ecclesiastics. These ecclesiastics wish to fault the Reform because its foundress, a solemnly professed *woman* (Teresa), freely

¹⁴⁸ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 226.

¹⁴⁹ Maslow, *Toward A Psychology of Being*, 208.

¹⁵⁰ Maslow, *Toward A Psychology of Being*, 207.

dispenses herself from monastic enclosure to accomplish the ends of her reforming activities.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ *Fundaciones* 27:20.

Conclusion: The Requisiteness of Mystical Transformation and Mystical Madness

Mad with joy, life and death dance to the rhythm of this music...¹

In concluding my theological discussion on mystical madness and God engaging the mystic in maddening fashions, I must consider the requisiteness of mystical transformation. The question begs to be asked, "Is the call to mysticism universal in respect to the Christian?" If this notion of universal vocation can be established to be consistent with the Christian tradition, then we might assert that this mystical call may be a comprehensive summon to *religious madness*.

Transpersonal psychology, as seen, provides us with the concept of the universal imperative -- intrinsic to our nature -- to self-actualization. Abraham Maslow, in *Toward a Psychology of Being*, insists that there is an

essential inner nature which is instinctoid, intrinsic, given, *natural*...and which tends strongly to persist.

The essential core, of which Maslow writes, tends in all human persons towards self-actualization, although not all persons reach such maturity. Instead, many are sidetracked by and into neuroses and psychoses.² For Maslow, the human essence is disposed to the *Transcendent* (whatever this might be) which is found in and through, and even realized in the process of self-actualization. Thus, the fully actualized person must rely on a "framework of values, a philosophy of life, a religion or religion-surrogate to

¹ Evelyn Underhill, *Practical Mysticism* (Columbus, OH: Ariel Press, 1942), 118.

² Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (Toronto, ON: D. Van Nostrand, 1962), 178-181.

live by and understand by."³ Without a strong value system, persons are inclined towards psychopathology.

Michael Washburn in *Ego*, 1st ed., seemingly building on Maslow's assumptions⁴ maintains that "integration is an inherited destiny belonging to humankind as a whole." All persons by their very nature tend towards transcendence -- both the transcending of the ego and toward the Transcendent, but it is a "rare" thing for one to be so integrated. This rarity appears to be the result of several things: 1. all persons forfeit their true self in the process of socialization and in order to maintain an equilibrium with society; hence, many do little or nothing to retrieve most of the true self; 2. those who seek retrieval of the true self fear the necessary derepression of the true self, especially the cost the derepression has on the false self in order to reach authenticity; 3. there are inherent dangers in this derepression: the "fury" of the unrepressed instincts which overwhelm the psyche and which are part of the true self; there is a very real risk of not being able to retrieve the true self and ending up with a damaged false self to show for the effort. Even so, Washburn argues that "only a small minority" of the small number of the integrated "are prophets, saints or mystical illuminati."⁵ "Mystical illumination, like prophetic vision and saintly compassion, is statistically extremely rare, even among integrated

³ Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, 192.

⁴ That is, building on these assumptions if not directly, at least indirectly.

⁵ Washburn, *Ego*, 1st ed., 224, 225, 233.

persons" because it is "the divine power" not the human will "that elects the times and places" which it wishes to disclose itself to the human person.⁶ The *apparent* elitism of mysticism, I would suppose, is based on several things. From a theological and a psychological viewpoint, one might insist upon the particularity of the divine offer, as well as the scarcity of the personality able to receive such an offer. Even if everyone found integration, mystics would still be few and far between, so it seems.

One needs to sort out whether the extreme rarity of mystically transformed persons is in fact due to a general lack of innate direction towards mysticism; i.e. most persons are not inclined towards the mystical life. Or, rather is it that few persons are actually open to mystical experience,⁷ or that God makes a mystical initiative in the most infrequent instance?

Teresa of Avila is of the position that mystical favors -- thus the mystical life -- are rare in Christianity because most Christians are not receptive to God's/Christ's more direct communication. Part of this lack of receptiveness is due to the narrow vision such persons have of God:

*Yo sé que quien esto no creyere no lo verá por experiencia...*⁸

Teresa is of the mind that Christians often close the door to

⁶ Washburn, 1st ed., 233.

⁷ Either their self-preoccupation or their positivistic outlook prevents them from being available for mystical experience, hence transformation. See Donald Evans, *Spirituality and Human Nature* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993), 17-49, 147-167.

⁸ Loosely: "I have come to know that whoever does not believe will forfeit the chance to experience [these favors]..." Literally: "I have known that whoever does not believe will not see for experience..." *Moradas* I:1:4.

receiving mystical favors.⁹ This narrowness of vision is due to either a belief that God is incapable of supranormal communications or, that we are no longer in the period of Christianity where God would find it *necessary* or *propitious* to communicate in such a direct fashion. In *Way of Perfection*, Teresa gives another reason for a shortage of Christian mystics: a lack of spiritual and ascetical preparation.¹⁰ Teresa wishes that her audience is actively and conscientiously about

*aparejándose para contemplación con la perfección que queda dicha.*¹¹

In this same section in *Way of Perfection*, Teresa further reveals her mystical theology. Teresa addresses her audience (not confined to nuns) in a fashion to suggest that mysticism is made universally available to all Christians by the free munificence of God, but our cooperation is necessary. If we cooperate in humility and detachment and do not see mystical union in this life, the bounty of mysticism *will* be saved for us in the next life.¹²

According to Teresa's mind and experience it appears that there are no particular *types* of persons who are ultimately more destined to mysticism. Yet, that does not mean that Teresa (or even Washburn) would object to the notion that, by nature, there are those types of persons which are more easily open to mysticism,

⁹ *Moradas* V:1:8.

¹⁰ *Camino* (Valladolid) 17:7.

¹¹ "Equipping themselves for contemplation with the perfection [of which I have] carefully spoke." *Camino* (Valladolid) 17:7.

¹² *Camino* (Valladolid) 17:7.

that is, who have more natural facility for it. We might give as examples those who tend to hypersensitivity and the paranormal. But Teresa would go further by arguing on behalf of grace, the freedom of God to make *anyone* ready for a direct contemplative reception of God in this life: for everyone, more or less proximately, are potentially directed to the beatific vision as the culmination of their human existence. Thus, everyone is potentially capable of contemplation in this life. According to Teresa, in everyone there is the divine "hidden treasure," *tesoro escondido*.

*Pues es verdad que le hay en nosotras mismas.*¹³

In the end, one can merely say that there are different types of mystics.¹⁴

Again, Teresa is emphatic about this universal call to the mystical life. For, Teresa contends that everyone is a castle of the Godhead,¹⁵ and that

*la puerta para entrar en este castillo es la oración.*¹⁶

The call to mysticism is universal because included within this

¹³ "Well then, the truth is that it [the hidden treasure] lies within our selves." *Moradas* V:1:2.

¹⁴ This might mean that some types are more or less *mad* than others. But I am convinced that all persons who are open to Christian mysticism will experience mystical *madness*. As the divine presence initiates efforts to transform the mystic into a divine likeness -- and the divine presence is excessive -- there will at least be an excessiveness to every mystic. As Paul may be read, the Christian is to identify with the Person of Christ, such that the ego is to assume the identity of Christ -- "Not I, but Christ within me" (Gal 2:20). This identification involves a psychological transformation required of every mystic to the extent that the ego is stretched/broken and reformed around/accommodated to the Divine Person and the human ego of Jesus Christ. This would require at minimal short periods of psychological disequilibrium or distress: i.e. some manifestation of *madness*.

¹⁵ *Moradas* I:1:1.

¹⁶ "the door by which to enter within this castle [of the self] is prayer." *Moradas* II:1:11.

call to a personal relationship with God is a coming to self-knowledge, and growth from that self-knowledge.¹⁷ This self-knowledge entails an acceptance of oneself which is necessary for all Christians in order to reach perfection. This Teresian *trek through the castle into the arms of Christ* might find its parallel with Washburn's integral destiny for the human race, i.e. integration. The two -- mystical experience and self-understanding -- are not separable for Teresa. All Christians are called to heaven, and all Christians are called to find themselves. The means to arrive at God and the true self is a life of prayer, which for Teresa is the root of mysticism:

*Mas no dijo: <<por este camino vengan unos y por éste otros>>; antes fue tan grande su misericordia, que a nadie quitó procurase venir a esta fuente de vida a beber.*¹⁸

Teresa is not alone in her sweeping estimation of the call to mysticism. Antonio Royo, OP and Jordan Aumann, OP in *The Theology of Christian Perfection* note a long history of this position among Western Catholic mystics and writers of spirituality.¹⁹ Both Royo and Aumann themselves assert that

all are called, at least by a remote and sufficient call

¹⁷ *Moradas* I:2:8.

¹⁸ "But He [Christ] did not say: 'Some proceed by this path, others by another.' Rather, His mercy was so great that He prevented no one from endeavoring to come to this spring of life to drink." *Camino* (Valladolid) 20:1.

¹⁹ Royo and Aumann give the following extensive, but not exhaustive list: John of the Cross, Francis de Sales, Bonaventure, Catherine of Siena, Eckhart, Tauler, Suso, Ruysbroeck, Blosius, John of Avila, Marmion, Lehody, Louismet, Stolz, Gardeil, Garrigou-Lagrange, Arintero, Joret, Philipon, Peralta, Bruno of Jesus and Mary, Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, de la Taille, Jaegher, Schrijvers, Cayré, Mercier, Saudreau and Maritain. Antonio Royo, OP and Jordan Aumann, OP, *The Theology of Christian Perfection* (Dubuque, IA: Priory Press, 1962), 183.

to the mystical state.²⁰

Following on Garrigou-Lagrange's notions, Royo and Aumann explain their position in four steps: 1. everyone is called *remotely* and sufficiently "by the very fact of being in the state of grace;" 2. this remote call is changed to a *proximate sufficient* call when the soul does not "place obstacles" in the way of God's "plans;" 3. this proximate sufficient call becomes a *proximate efficacious call* when the soul begins to cooperate with God's plans and continues not to place obstacles in the way of divine communication; 4. the "degree of holiness" which the individual person will "attain" through mysticism is dependent upon both the "fidelity" of the Christian and the free activity of God in predestining the soul to sanctity.²¹

At first, Auguste Poulain would seem to take issue with Royo's and Aumann's position. Poulain maintains that not every Christian is called to transforming mystical union. God makes use of various means to arrive at perfection and intimacy with Him. What Poulain is trying to do, is to argue the liberty of God in the distribution of His favors in these matters. But Poulain ought not to be read as denying the general call of all Christians to mystical transformation, whether in this life or in the next (a purgatory). Poulain admits elsewhere that while mystical graces are not necessary to attain holiness, few of those who have reached the

²⁰ But they go one further and insist that "Christian perfection is impossible outside the mystical life." Royo and Aumann, *Theology of Christian Perfection*, 183, 180.

²¹ Royo and Aumann, *Theology of Christian Perfection*, 184.

more heroic levels of sanctity have done so without them. And furthermore, he maintains that while many persons do not actually reach the heights of mystical union in this life, a substantial number of persons actually proceed through the mystical process of transformation short of union.²²

Keeping with this tradition, Karl Rahner, in "Religious Enthusiasm And the Experience of Grace," holds that there is present in all human persons by their very nature a transcendent element or "reference." This transcendence through a "self-communication" of Uncreated Grace (the Trinity) is "permanently and necessarily ordered" on an individual basis "to the direct presence of God." The fulfilment of this early communication of Grace is the "beatific vision."²³ Thus it appears that for Rahner, there is a nascent mysticism natural to the human person which depends upon the good favor of the Godhead to direct it towards God's Self. This favor, although a free act of God, seems universally available though not universally applied, as the beatific vision is made, at the creation of each person, the goal of this core mysticism. (Is it not said in 1 Jn 3:2b: *Quoniam videbimus eum sicuti est?*)²⁴

Finally, Donald Evans also maintains the rarity of the "saint." Saints indeed must have a mystical element to their lives as God is "Source" of their spiritual and psychic inheritance. But

²² Auguste Poulain, SJ, *Des Grâces D'Oraison: Traité de Théologie Mystique*, 11th ed. (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1931), 552-556.

²³ Karl Rahner, SJ, "Religious Enthusiasm And the Experience of Grace," *Theological Investigations*, vol. 16: *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1979), 40-41.

²⁴ "For we shall see Him as He is."

Evans argues, this rarity is contingent upon the difficulty which individuals encounter in the process of overcoming narcissism. Few surmount the dominance of the ego and its claim for attention over and against God, true self and others.²⁵

In this conclusion, therefore, I believe that I have sufficiently demonstrated that the notion of the call of the Christian to mysticism as a universal call, is representative of a rather extensive tradition, especially in Catholic Christianity, moreover Teresian, supported as it is by transpersonal psychology. If this is an accurate understanding of the biblical call to come follow Jesus (Jn 12:26) Who was one with the Father (Jn 10:30), then the Christian ought to aspire to a mystical life (contemplative, or contemplative-active) whether or not he/she is successful in it. And, as I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, that Teresa believed mysticism involved a partaking in divine madness, then the universal call to mysticism is a universal call to partaking in divine madness, an openness to a religious maddening.

²⁵ In highlighting this difficulty, Evans is not denying the divine initiative and freedom to draw persons out of this narcissism. Donald Evans, "Comedy and Morality - A Reply to Diane Yeager," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1984), 212-218.

Appendix 1: Arrobamiento: An Issue of Linguistics

In *Vida/Life* 20:1, Teresa makes the comment
*...arrobamiento, o elevamiento, o vuelo que llaman de espíritu o arrebatamiento que todo es uno. Digo que estos diferentes nombres todo es una cosa, y también se llama éxtasis.*¹

From my limited search into the meaning of *arrobamiento*, it seems that in common parlance such terms and phrases as listed above by Teresa are and were interchangeable.² This comment of Teresa, then, might be considered more of an observation of fact as to popular usage, rather than a theological or spiritual statement. Teresa makes subtle distinctions between each of the terms as if each represent somewhat distinct spiritual experiences.³

Interchangeability has lead to various translations of *arrobamiento*. Commentators on Teresa of Avila are not in agreement. As E.W. Trueman Dicken points out,

Although her terminology has become standard in Spanish there is no recognized scale of equivalents in English. Even scholarly translations of her works into our language show inconsistencies of a gravely misleading kind in this respect...⁴

E. Allison Peers maintains that the words listed by Teresa in *Vida*

¹ "...rapture, elevation, flight of the spirit or transport are the same. I say that, while they are different in number, they are the same thing, and it is also called *ecstasy*." For the sake of opening argument, the above Spanish terms for a particular mystical phenomenon are given these English equivalents by myself. They are the same given by Kavanaugh and Rodriguez in *Collected Works*. The appropriateness or inappropriateness of translation will be discussed shortly.

² Consult, for example, *arrobamiento* in Pedro De Alcalá-Zamora and Téophile Antigmar, *Diccionario Francés-Español y Español-Francés* (Barcelona: Editorial Ramón Sopena, 1936), 64; Emilio M. Martínez Amado, *Diccionario Inglés-Español y Español-Inglés* (Barcelona: Editorial Ramón Sopena, 1945), 100; Teresa Alvarez Garcia et al., *Harper Collins Spanish-English, English-Spanish Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Harper Collins, 1994), 44.

³ Diedre Green, *Gold in the Crucible: Teresa of Avila and the Western Mystical Tradition* (Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1989), 61).

⁴ E.W. Trueman Dicken, *The Crucible of Love: A Study of the Mysticism of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 396.

20:1 are corresponding terms. He prefers to use "the word rapture (*arrobamiento*)," since this is the expression most frequented by Teresa.⁵ Fr. Theophilus, ODC also uses *rapture* for *arrobamiento*,⁶ as does, for example, Evelyn Underhill,⁷ Gregory D'Sousa, OCD,⁸ Deidre Green,⁹ and most recently, Mary Frohlich.¹⁰ Adolphe Tanquerey translates *arrobamiento* into the French as *ravissement*,¹¹ the French equivalent of the English, *rapture*.¹² Auguste Poulain does likewise.¹³ Tessa Bielecki uses several terms: "ecstasy," "the prayer of ecstasy," "the ecstasy of prayer," "ecstatic prayer" and "rapture."¹⁴ Ernst Arbman favors "ecstasy."¹⁵ Others, such

⁵ E. Allison Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, vol. 1, 2nd ed., revised (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1951), 158.

⁶ Fr. Theophilus, ODC "Mystical Ecstasy According to St. Teresa", *St. Teresa of Avila: Studies in Her Life, Doctrine and Times*, ed. Fr. Thomas, ODC and Fr. Gabriel, ODC (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1963), 147.

⁷ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Scarborough, ON: Meridian, 1974), 368.

⁸ Gregory D'Sousa, OCD, *Teresian Mysticism and Yoga* (Carmelhill, Mangalore, India: By the author, 1981), 138.

⁹ Green, *Gold in the Crucible*, 61.

¹⁰ Mary Frohlich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 212.

¹¹ Adolphe Tanquerey, *Précis de Théologie Ascétique de Mystique*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Desclée et Cⁱ, 1924),

¹² For the Latin etymology of *rapture* and *ravish* see *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, 2nd ed., ed. Jean L. McKechnie (Cleveland, OH: Dorset & Baber, 1983), 1494, 1498. Both words come from the Latin, *rapere*, to seize.

¹³ Auguste Poulain, *Des Grâces D'Oraison Traité De Théologie Mystique*, 11th ed. (Paris: Gabriel Beauchesne, 1931), 254.

¹⁴ Tessa Bielecki, *Holy Daring: An Outrageous Gift to Modern Spirituality from Saint Teresa, the Grand Wild Woman of Avila* (Rockport, MA: Element, 1994), 33-34.

¹⁵ Ernst Arbman, *Ecstasy or Religious Trance: In the Experience of the Ecstatics and from the Psychological Point of View*, vol. 2 (Norstedts: Svenska Bokförlaget, 1968), 64, 68-69.

as Dicken¹⁶ and Robert Petersson¹⁷ favor *trance* over *rapture*; Elizabeth Teresa Howe prefers "*ecstatic trance*".¹⁸ These latter choices of ecstasy or *trance* seems inappropriate. The Spanish has a specific word, *éxtasis*, for *ecstasy*; so, too, *trance* is the specific Spanish word for *trance*. There is no need to make an equivalence between Spanish and English over the matter of ecstasy or *trance*. Arbman, Dicken, Petersson and Howe, go on to translate Teresa's *arrobatamiento* as *rapture*.¹⁹

Arrobatamiento comes from the Spanish root, *arrobar*. *Arrobar* is further derived from the Latin, *ad* + *rapio*, which means roughly, to seize violently by the teeth.²⁰ This proves to be significant when discussing the characteristics which Teresa of Avila assigns to the phenomenon of *arrobatamiento*, one of which is that of being seized violently. Teresa maintains that resistance to the divine activity in the phenomenon is impossible.²¹ *Arrobatamiento*, on the other hand, comes from the root, *arrebatar*, which means "to take,"

¹⁶ Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, 396.

¹⁷ Robert T. Petersson, *The Art of Ecstasy: Teresa, Bernini, and Crashaw* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 146.

¹⁸ Elizabeth Teresa Howe, "Donne and the Spanish Mystics on Ecstasy", *Notre Dame English Journal* 13 (Spring 1981): 31.

¹⁹ Arbman, *Ecstasy or Religious Trance*, 64, 68-69; Dicken, *The Crucible of Love*, 396; Petersson, *The Art of Ecstasy*, 146; Howe, "Donne and the Spanish Mystics," 31.

²⁰ See the following: For *arrobar*, *Diccionario Medieval Español*, tomo 1 (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca), 392; for *arrapare/arripere*, W.H. Maigne D'Arnis, *Lexicon Manuale Ad Scriptores Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis* (Paris: Migne, 1890), 210; for *arripio/arripere*, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. Glare (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), 174.

²¹ *Vida* 20:4.

"wrench" or "to carry off or away."²² Yet it, too, shares the same root with *arrobamiento*, as well as also having a sense of violence and irresistibility.²³ Still, *arreatamiento* would seem to be more suitably translated as transport, rather than rapture, since *arreatamiento* also contains the notions of removal and delivery.²⁴

To compound the matter, Kavanaugh and Rodriguez are not consistent in their assignment of the word *rapture*. While *arrobamiento* is always translated as *rapture*, sometimes *arreatamiento* is also translated as *rapture*.²⁵ Even *arreatada* is translated by both of them as *rapture*,²⁶ and again, *apresurado arreatar el espiritu* as "a quick enrapturing of the spirit."²⁷ As to the *Cantico Espiritual* of John of the Cross, Kavanaugh and Rodriguez not only translate *arrobamientos* as raptures, but as elevations.²⁸

Throughout the dissertation I have been consistent in my use of *arrobamiento* and its translation. *Rapture* is the word which I

²² Garcia et al., *Harper Collins Spanish-English*, 42.

²³ See, for example, La Academia Española, *Nuevo Diccionario De La Lengua Castellana* (Paris: Libreria De Don Vincente Salvá, 1847), 101, 104; D. Samuel Gili Gaya, *Diccionario General Ilustrado De La Lengua Española*, 2nd ed. (Barcelona: Publicaciones y Ediciones Spes, 1953), 160.

²⁴ Even so, to confuse the issue more, Teresa will speak of *arrobamiento* in terms of abduction as will be seen. Yet according to Teresa, during *arreatamiento* there is a greater swiftness and deftness to the abduction than in *arrobamiento*, thus *transport* seems more warranted.

²⁵ e.g. *Vida* 24:5; 38:1; 38:5; 40:1.

²⁶ e.g. *Fundaciones* 6:1.

²⁷ *Moradas* 6:5:7.

²⁸ John of the Cross, *The Spiritual Canticle, The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD and Otilio Rodriguez, OCD (Washington, DC: ICS, 1991), 13:4, 7. Also *Cantico Espiritual, Segunda Redacción*.

have associated with *arrobamiento*. This association was with the above qualifications in mind. Such a position was not taken without acknowledging that the terms *arrobamiento* and *arreatamiento*, for example, are slippery, and their contextual nuances are not always so cut and dry.

Appendix 2: *Vida* 20:1: Are the Phenomena Spiritually Identical?

Spiritually and theologically, commentators interpreting Teresa and/or mystical experiences seem to fall on a spectrum ranging from treating the enumerated phenomena -- of rapture, elevation, flight of the spirit, transport and ecstasy -- as little more than synonyms, to *phases* or *grades* of what remain fundamentally the same core mystical experience. Even within Teresa's period, theological commentators often made no distinction. For example, Alison Weber cites a passage from a work by Sebastián de Covarrubias, which demonstrates an interchangeability in terms:

*Digo, pues, que éxtasi es un arrobamiento de espíritu que dexa al hombre fuera de todo espíritu...*¹

The same is true, at times, in our more contemporary era. Joseph de Guibert, SJ makes no distinctions between ecstasy and rapture, but treats them as words signifying the same encounter.² This is also the approach of Nelson Pike.³ Rowan Williams equates ecstasy and rapture, distinguishing them from union, in that ecstasy and rapture involve "a sense of the physical."⁴ Carole Slade sees all

¹ "I say, then, that ecstasy is a rapture of spirit that abandons a man completely outside [himself]..." Sebastián Covarrubias Horozco, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana española* (Madrid: L. Sanchez, 1611; mod. ed. Madrid: Turner, 1977), Cited in Alison Weber, "Between ecstasy and exorcism: religious negotiation in sixteenth-century Spain," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23 (Spring 1993): 223. Translation is mine, not Weber's.

² Joseph de Guibert, SJ, *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, trans. Paul Barrett, OFM Cap. (New York, NY: Sheed & Ward, 1953), 354.

³ Nelson Pike, *Mystic Union: An Essay in the Phenomenology of Mysticism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), ix, 28.

⁴ He denies throughout his book physical manifestations in raptures such as levitation, hence the word *sense*. Rowan Williams, *Teresa of Avila* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1991), 69.

these terms as representative of elevation.⁵ *Le ravissement*, *l'union* and *l'extase* are treated without discrimination by Gustave Thils.⁶ At one point Diedre Green acts in a similar fashion:

Rapture, ecstasy, or whichever word we choose to give it, then, is a brief state where the soul is transported or caught up to God. The physical effects are often those of trance... .⁷

And yet Green cannot but admit to "slight distinctions" or "minor differences" between the five phenomena, but still asserts that "they may be as of no importance."⁸ Peers takes Teresa here at face value -- as all being one, and so speaks of only rapture "which is the term she most favors."⁹ Christopher Bache treats rapture, elevation, flight and transport as names describing the same "favor."¹⁰ Commenting on Teresa, even St. Francis de Sales (17th century) treats all of these terms as more or less denoting *l'union* ("union"), the differences between terms being decided on duration of experience.¹¹ D'Sousa maintains that these indicators

⁵ Carole Slade, *St. Teresa of Avila: Author of A Heroic Life* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995), 92.

⁶ Gustave Thils, *Sainteté Chrétienne: Précis De Théologie Ascétique* (Paris: Desclée De Brouwer, 1963), 545, 546.

⁷ Diedre Green, *Gold in the Crucible: Teresa of Avila and the Western Mystical Tradition* (Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset: Element Books, 1989), 61.

⁸ Green, 61.

⁹ E. Allison Peers, *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, vol. 1, 2nd ed., revised (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1951), 158.

¹⁰ Christopher M. Bache, "A Reappraisal of Teresa of Avila's Supposed Hysteria", *Journal of Religion and Health* 24 (Winter 1985), 303.

¹¹ Francis de Sales, *Traité De L'Amour De Dieu*, vol. 2, *Oeuvres De Saint François De Sales*, tome cinquième (Annecy: Abry, 1894), 18. On Salesian dependency on and interpretation of Teresa, see William Marceau, CSB, *L'Optimisme Dans L'Oeuvre De Saint François De Sales* (Paris: Editions P. Lethiellieux, 1973), 150-157. Note, to

represent phenomena which are identical in essence, and yet which have "subtle distinctions between them."¹² Tessa Bielecki, OCD treats the terms as "almost synonymous," and contrasts them with Teresian *union*, their involving exterior "effects" to union's primarily interior modalism.¹³ Distinguishing these phenomena "only in the mode of their effect on the soul," Dicken maintains that they are "essentially of the same order of experience."¹⁴ Evelyn Underhill makes a two-fold classification of experience, between ecstasy and rapture, with the primary differentiating characteristics being voluntariness and involuntariness respectively.¹⁵ Harvey Egan, SJ and William James subset rapture into ecstasy. Egan, like Underhill, differentiates rapture from ecstasy on the grounds of irresistibility. James distinguishes rapture only by its grave *depression* of breathing and circulation, and the sense of the soul being "dis-severed from the body."¹⁶ Tanqueray holds to three *phases* of the one mystical experience of ecstasy: ecstasy, rapture, and flight of the spirit. The choice of the word, *phases*, seems to imply a progression from the former to

the contrary, that Pike places De Sales at odds with Teresa's definition of rapture and ecstasy. Pike, *Mystic Union*, 26-27.

¹² Gregory D'Sousa, OCD, *Teresian Mysticism and Yoga* (Carmelhill, Mangalore, India: By the author, 1981), 138, 132.

¹³ Tessa Bielecki, OCD *Teresa of Avila: Mystical Writings* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1994), 153.

¹⁴ E.W. Trueman Dicken, *The Crucible of Love: A Study of the Mysticism of St. Teresa of Jesus and St. John of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1963), 396.

¹⁵ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Scarborough, ON: Meridian, 1974), 368.

¹⁶ Harvey Egan, SJ, *Christian Mysticism: The Future of a Tradition* (New York, NY: Pueblo, 1984), 306. William James, *The Variety of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London: Fontana, 1960), 398.

the latter.¹⁷ Fr. Theophilus while arguing for the "fundamental unity" of these experiences, divides the phenomena, again as Tanquerey, into three: "*union with suspension, rapture or ecstasy proper and ecstatic pain.*" Here Theophilus envisions them as "grades" of encounter rather than phases.¹⁸ Albert Farges divides ecstasy or "transport" into "three forms": "ordinary ecstasy," "rapture," and "flight of the spirit," distinguishing them primarily upon rapidity. Rapture is more "impetuous" than ecstasy, flight of the spirit has more "intensity" than rapture and which "throws the mind into a stupor and a thrill of wonderment."¹⁹ Similarly, Jess Byron Hollenbach takes the position that "*rapture, elevation, flight of the spirit, transport, and ecstasy* all referred to essentially the same phenomenon." The difference between these phenomena is principally "vehemence" or "magnitude": for example, transport is more vehement than rapture.²⁰ Finally, but not exclusively, Arbman divides these experiences into two, ecstasy and rapture, and values them as "different degrees" according to the "depth, intensity, and manner" of how they

¹⁷ *Il y a trois phases principales dans l'extase: l'extase simple, le ravissement et le vol de l'esprit.* ("There are three principal phases within ecstasy: simple ecstasy, rapture and flight of the spirit.") Adolphe Tanquerey, *Précis de Théologie Ascétique de Mystique*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Desclée et Cⁱ, 1924), 914.

¹⁸ Fr. Theophilus, ODC, "Mystical Ecstasy According to St. Teresa," *St. Teresa of Avila: Studies in Her Life, Doctrine and Times*, ed. Fr. Thomas, ODC and Fr. Gabriel, ODC (Dublin: Clonmore and Reynolds, 1963), 142, 146.

¹⁹ Albert Farges, *Mystical Phenomena: Compared with Their Human and Diabolical Counterfeits; A Treatise on Mystical Theology: In Agreement with the Principles of St. Teresa Set Forth by the Carmelite Congress of 1923 at Madrid*, 2nd ed., trans. S.P. Jacques (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1926), 168-169.

²⁰ Jess Byron Hollenbach, *Mysticism: Experience, Response, and Empowerment* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 137, 548.

occur.²¹

I propose that one manner of understanding Teresa is to consider the way Teresa ends the list found in *Vida* 20:1 with the term ecstasy. This might suggest that she understood ecstasy as a core experience whence the other phenomena, such as rapture, exist as subsets or derivatives. Such a stance would seem to concur with Silverio De Santa Teresa's position that Teresa's list

are different names for the same things, that they all are forms of ecstasy.²²

Still, one would acknowledge real distinctions between them. How significant these distinctions are would remain debatable. Basing her theology of the term ecstasy in the main on Teresa of Avila, Underhill holds that a trance which is expansive, resulting in a "perfect unity of consciousness" and a "participation in Divine Reality," essentially constitutes ecstasy.²³ This is the sense for which Thomas Aquinas employs the word *extasis*.²⁴

We could, like Petersson, view this passage as a sample of the early Teresa, where terms are confused, to be clarified in her later works, such as *Moradas*, where "her knowledge of the terms certainly advanced."²⁵ This approach views Teresa's writing on the

²¹ Arberman, *Ecstasy or Religious Trance*, 65.

²² R.P. Silverio De Santa Teresa, ODC, *Saint Teresa of Jesus*, trans. A Discalced Carmelite (London: Sands & Co., 1947), 64.

²³ Underhill, *Mysticism*, 376, 367, 371, 369.

²⁴ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Cum Textu Ex Recensione Leonina*, vol. 1 (Rome: Marietti, 1952), I-II, Q. 28, a. 3, resp.

²⁵ Robert T. Petersson, *The Art of Ecstasy: Teresa, Bernini, and Crashaw* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 26.

subject as necessarily progressive over time, each later statement correcting or refining an earlier statement. Or, we could take Teresa's references to rapture and the other phenomena as contextual, as now trying to say one thing, now another, and only in the rare instance adjusting an earlier position. This second posture seems more plausible. For example, Teresa almost repeats her thought found in *Vida* 20:1, that rapture and ecstasy are in some way the same, about ten years later in the preface to *Moradas* 6:4:

*Trata de cuando suspende Dios el alma en la oración con arrobamiento o éxtasis o rapto, que todo es uno a mi parecer...*²⁶,

By no means does this represent a progression in thought.

Teresa couples various mystical expressions together, suggesting that their underlying realities have something in common. For example, suspension and rapture are paired or outrightly equated in *Fundaciones* 28:31, *Cuentas* 54 (59):72, and *Moradas* 6:4:5 as if to say that rapture, like suspension, involves a partial or complete suspension of the senses,²⁷ and may also entail a suspension of the intellect,²⁸ a suspension of all of the interior faculties²⁹ or of the will alone.³⁰ Suspension as used

²⁶ "Treats of when God suspends the soul during prayer with rapture or ecstasy or kidnapping which are all one in my view..."

²⁷ *Vida* 20:18, 34:17 *Fundaciones* 28:36; *Moradas* 6:4:2, 6:4:4, 6:9:7.

²⁸ *Fundaciones* 6:4; *Moradas* 6:7:12 referring back to 6:4:17.

²⁹ *Vida/Life* 20:11, 29; *Cuentas* 54a:5/*Testimonies* 59:5; *Moradas/Castle* 6:4:4.

³⁰ *Vida* 20:19.

by Teresa appears to be a generic term to designate a sort of *paralysis* of human activity as a characteristic of mystical phenomena, such as raptures or flights.³¹

Other mystical phenomena are viewed by Teresa as sharing patterns of experience with rapture. Union and rapture have commonalities. For example, the faculties of the soul are united and caught up with God in either union or rapture.³² Ecstasy itself resembles rapture. Teresa does not hesitate to pair ecstasy and rapture as if two names for the same divine encounter.³³ Yet, she also appears to treat ecstasy as a word which designates the peak experience of joy/pleasure/seduction (*el gozar, el gozo*) found in both rapture and union.³⁴ It is in the *ecstatic period* of rapture that one is made receptive and privy to "revelations" (*revelaciones*) and "visions" (*visiones*).³⁵ John of the Cross, deferring to Teresa,³⁶ seems to treat *rapture* as the violent

³¹ This is fashion which Frolich seems to treat the notion of suspension. Green, on the other hand, reacts to suspension as sometimes an identical, sometimes a parallel mystical phenomenon with rapture, but not as a characteristic of a mystical phenomenon more inclusive than suspension. Mary Frolich, *The Intersubjectivity of the Mystic: A Study of Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993), 212. Green, *Gold in the Crucible*, 43.

³² *Fundaciones* 6:4; see also *Vida* 20:11.

³³ e.g. *Vida* 20:28; 21:12.

³⁴ Consider both *Vida* 29:14 and 22:11. Marghanita Laski, in much the same way, defines natural and spiritual ecstasies as expansive, fleeting peak experiences of joy. Marghanita Laski, *Ecstasy in Secular and Religious Experiences* (Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1961), 42. Underhill acknowledges the use of the term *ecstasy* in this way. Underhill, *Mysticism*, 369.

³⁵ *Vida* 29:12. *Éxtasis*, here, refers back to *arrobamientos* in 29:8. This ecstatic period in rapture, or even transport, would seem to explain why Teresa was able to perceive locutions during such events. See for example, *Vida* 24:5.

³⁶ John of the Cross, *Cantico Espiritual*, 13:7.

withdrawal of the soul from sensual existence, *ecstasy* as the joyful expanse, and *flight* as the contemplation which occurs during the ecstatic period:

*Por el vuelo entiende la contemplación de aquel éxtasis que habemos dicho.*³⁷

Underhill, also basing her ecstatic notions on Teresa's, points out that there are other characteristics which are specific to ecstasy as a phenomenon of trance and suspension of physical sense. Such defining characteristics include, but are not limited to, voluntariness, gradualness, and non-violence.³⁸

Finally, flight of the spirit and transport are treated as subsets of rapture.³⁹ Flight is referred to by Teresa as "another type of rapture". One distinguishing mark of flight when compared to rapture is its extreme velocity.⁴⁰ Furthermore, it is deemed a form of escape.⁴¹ Transport is also known for its radical velocity,⁴² but is triggered by an insight.⁴³ I maintain that Teresa's subsetting flight and transport in rapture suggests that the onset of rapture is more rapid than union or what Underhill understands as Teresa's ecstasy. Furthermore, I am asserting that

³⁷ "By flight he/she understands contemplation within ecstasy, as we have said." John of the Cross, *Cantico Espiritual*, 13:11. See also 13:2.

³⁸ Underhill, *Mysticism*, 359, 367, 368, 376.

³⁹ See Fr. Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, ODC, *St. Teresa of Jesus* (Cork: Mercier, 1949), 89.

⁴⁰ *Moradas* 6:5:1.

⁴¹ ...*el espíritu se escapó*...: "...the spirit escapes..." *Cuentas* 54 (59):9 (12).

⁴² In *Vida* 24:5 Teresa equates transport and rapture, and emphasizes the velocity of transport.

⁴³ *Cuentas* 54 (59):8 (9).

when Teresa refers to the onset of rapture as gradual, this is in comparison with flight and transport which are deemed that much faster.

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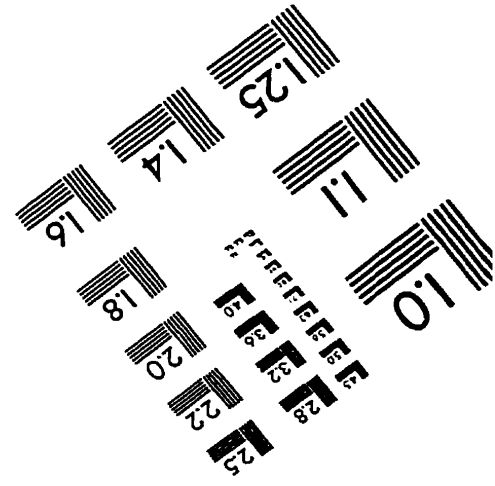
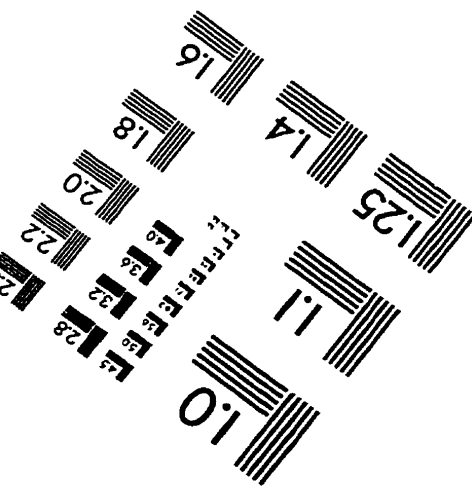
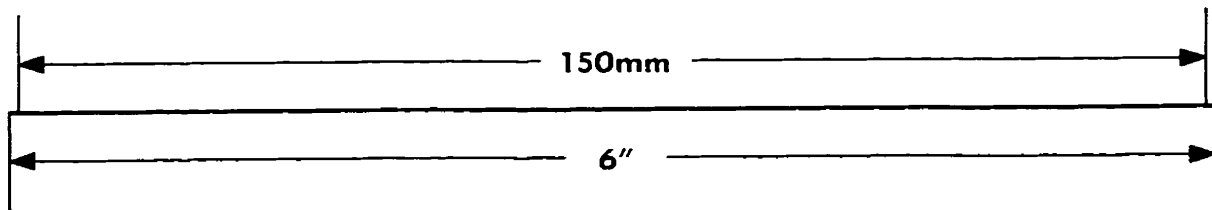
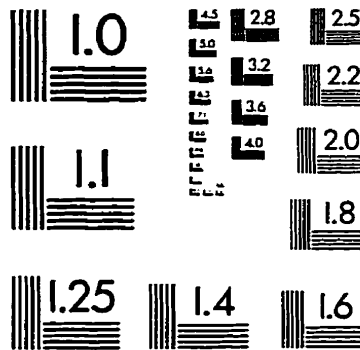
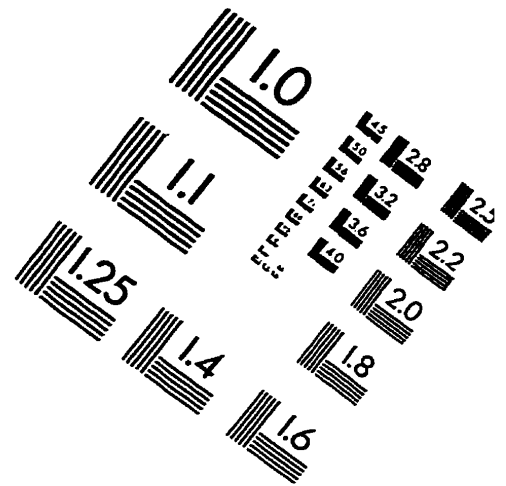
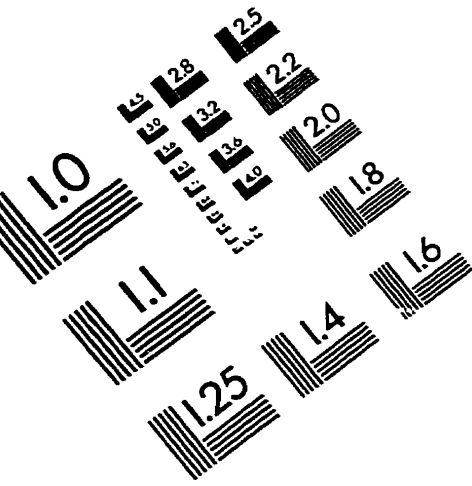
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