

Visions, Entheogens and the Question of Illumination in San Juan de la Cruz.

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Abstract: *This paper investigates the relationship between shamanistic mystical experiences and the direct experience of God claimed by many Christian mystics, using San Juan de la Cruz (St. John of the Cross) as the main example. Many metaphors found in his mystical poetry are strikingly similar to those found within ancient and current shamanistic traditions. Legitimate cases of mystical illumination are also contrasted with mental delusions and phantasies, autosuggested hallucinations, and hallucinations brought about by recreational drug use. The ability to cure, frequently claimed by both shamans and religious mystics, is taken as one criterion for distinguishing legitimate from illegitimate experiences. It is acknowledged, however, that legitimate curing and cases of mere autosuggestion may be difficult to distinguish accurately. Tentative examples and proposals for alleviating this difficult are provided.*

The elementary mysteries,
absolutes,
incorruptibles of the science of God,
are disclosed from the dark and luminous silence.

DIONISIUS AREOPAGITA

Introduction.

We do not really know about the prime "matter" what human spirit is made of, which has not been much discussed. I am talking about the mystic issues as deep mystery. In fact, its latin etymology recalls that as much *-mysterium-* as *-mysticus-* refer to the same core: the mysteries, the mysterious life. Indeed, there are some poets or writers, who think about existence like the purest mystery, doing this from a poetic concept of creation: *-poiesis-*, as the creative soul's emblem of a so-called poetic spirit. This is no more than a vulcanian manifestation of that creative spirit within the fire of human heart. Therefore, is the human being only who writes poetry?

We know very few things about the inner feelings of poets, and of the dreamy spirit and the seekers of worlds. We can find hundreds, perhaps thousands of bundles of papers, which talk to us about verses, metrics, and history of literatures, indeed linguistic analysis. Yet, what happened to the "metric analysis" of the human feelings? Where is the manifestation of the dreamy spirit, the weaver of worlds?

San Juan de la Cruz represents the pivotal passion, building a myriad of word-and-worlds within the arena of diction: good verse, delicateness of concepts, and the clearness of a

language with which he harmonizes the whole architectonic frame: poetry and poet as mystic union.

In this paper I am interested in the relation between poetry and consciousness. Could consciousness, *per se*, generate a mystic state? or is necessary a "helper" to induce an altered state of consciousness? If so, what kind of "helper"? Drugs? *Entheogens*?¹ Could meditation, solitude, silence, induce those states of consciousness without such a "helper"?

My focus is that could it be impossible to reach God/s or any spirits realm, without first experiencing an altered state of consciousness: no matter how you experience it: entheogens, fasting, drum or music induction; but if you want to travel there, you must fall into an altered state of consciousness. It is not merely a poet we are talking about; it is about a whole man. A man with creative feelings, with a great spiritual fortitude, who through poetry states Christianity. Certainly San Juan de la Cruz was a Christian. However, we can find in him a much wider interest in a certain kind of occult God. These feelings possess a pantheist ambition, which seduces him through a bundle of esoteric ideas², indeed with Muslim influence³. I am not compelled to discuss that aspect, but only to examine the role of consciousness in his mystic union with (his) God. And from this union is born every example of mystic poetry and every agony, which we want to see. Then, consciousness touches the realm of mysticism: the vision. Thousands of eyes the Universe has, but our heart has only one; and it is the task of poets to open it and to display to it that which has erroneously been called -reality-. Hence, we cannot understand any mysticism if we denied to ourselves to access to this reality, because our current reality is just mere appearance. So, I prefer to center the crux of the question in this: Is there any difference among the Buddhist enlightenment, the shamanistic ecstasy or Jewish-Christian mysticism with its illuminative characteristic? Could the mind or the spirit approach that illumination independently of a "helper"? Is it possible to be in an altered state of consciousness and not grasping any mystical truth?

I maintain that mind can achieve such an altered states of consciousness without any truth. And that is it possible to achieve God/s but only under an altered state of consciousness. Also, it is possible to claim God/s from a state of simple "paranoia" and without any real illumination. The nature of mind could set up a chain of ideas, which more closely approximate illusion than truth. The psychedelic age produced much people taking drugs, close to mental

¹ This term is used by the scholar R.G. Wasson instead of "drug" or "hallucinogen".

² Vid., Satz, M.: *Umbria Lumbre. San Juan de la Cruz y la sabiduría de la Cábala y el Sufismo*. Ediciones Hiperión. Madrid, 1991. Passim.

³ Ver a este respecto, López-Baralt, L.: *San Juan de la Cruz y el Islam*. El Colegio de México. Univ. de Puerto Rico. México 1985.

illness, who claimed they had reached enlightenment. Others were supposed to have seen God only under the "power" of prayer. The staple question here could be: Is it possible that a Christian saint, for example San Juan de la Cruz, achieved an altered state of consciousness which could be truth and not a product of paranoia or illusion? My answer is: -yes. Now, the next step is: was a "helper" or something independent of it? To get illumination is not necessary to be a Christian. But within Christendom it has a special role. I think the best person who talked about this fact was Soren Kierkegaard. Yet, the *quid* is first to determine the difference between the enlightenment of shamans and, the enlightenment of Christian mystics. *Grosso modo*, it must be the same the state of enlightenment which Buddhism calls -nirvana- and that of Christian mystics: only language is different. My approach is hermeneutic. Christianity in its essence can teach us how to coordinate and determine what -illumination- is; but on the other hand, we should not forget its parallel to the concept of miracle. And so, the shamanistic healings could be considered miracles in the Christian sense. Not every illuminated person has power to heal in the sense of seeing God into a mystic state, or at least her/his God. First of all, the ill person is who cures him/herself, the saint is only a *medium*. Therefore, I would like to know if San Juan de la Cruz (or another saint) had the power to heal in the same way that a shaman has it. Hence, if the illumination state of consciousness gives such power as well or not. Thus, mental illness could be similar to that state of consciousness where God is seen and/or experienced, that is similar to a person who really has been in contact with the Gods. From here it is deduced that the human mind could easily be confident about thoughts, which are only product of empty hallucinations. Many people take drugs, follow religions and say to have seen God, or some kind of divinity or spirit. But no one of them has reached a great knowledge about the world, or a definitive explanation about the process of life and living. Indeed, they see themselves as illuminated or even as chosen by (their) God. Many of them do poetry, painting, and music or build a center to give lectures, and to advice people, but their "enlightenment" is just an illusion-delusion of their minds.

This is no surprising if we assume that the world is just the product of a collective illusion: everything we see has another model in another reality. This is mainly platonic, which is my perspective. Personally, I do not believe in hallucinations as internal entities of mind, but I think that hallucinations, in fact occurs and the person who "hallucinates" is actually "seeing" what he claims to perceive. Here the problem would be to establish the level of reality in which this "hallucination" is taking place. The platonic ideas of course, they are from our common reality *not*.

If San Juan de la Cruz saw, dreamt or wrote a fancy, I think he really experienced those "things" which he is talking about. But, in this case we must say that the human mind could model a chain of ideas perfectly, and to give them to our consciousness as truthful. On the other hand, a shaman sees another reality through the uses of entheogens, and of course he/she is seeing what he/she is claiming to perceive. This searching is full of incongruities. Therefore, I must analyze the binomial shaman-illuminated within the concept of mysticism. First of all, a shaman is a person who has received a hard-training. This training includes the mastering of altered states of consciousness. The results come from such states. It is a difficult task, and it requires a maximum attention of toward oneself. Product of that attention is that shamans have access to healing, as well as to do supernatural things: miracles.

San Juan de la Cruz was not a shaman. He was a monk with an exceptional sense for writing poetry. This feeling drove him to write and feel such a kind of poetry, which we can interpret as his mystic union with (his) God. The fact that stirs me is the possibility that all he felt could have been caused plainly by his mind, by delusion and with all the disadvantages accruing to this. As I said our mind is able to reason as well as imagine. The kingdom of the human mind drives us to believe everything as certain and even exterior, but the big obstacle here is when intuition tells to our mind that something is wrong.

Therefore, everything we think and feel is only a loop, which lies under the domain of mind. This class of mind is called the common mind that is the common person that is molded by the everyday life. San Juan de la Cruz claims in his poetry to have felt the realm of God. Although he was neither a shaman nor a guru, he affirms having that power of seeing. I wonder if that power includes the power of healing. We must not forget that many saints were able to cure and do miracles. What kind of knowledge is this? Is it a special state of consciousness that requires training?

Furthermore, if San Juan de la Cruz had access to another level of knowledge or reality; how did he reach it? In order to see those entities he claims to see, is necessary to keep a place in his heart for magic and poetic feelings. Thus, a road wherein to walk, that is to say the mystic path to accede to another reality. In this fashion, we have thought it pertinent to collate the shaman and the illuminated ones as possible parallel dimensions of the human spirit. There are two mainly aspects: illumination and miracles. At this point it is necessary to emphasize that not every illuminated person could do miracles, since we have to cure and to save ourselves, and it is not the task of "other" but of myself. On the other hand, should every person able to do miracles be illuminated? But here we have to be careful about the power of suggestion in those persons looking for "miracles" in healing related matters. If we talk in a Christian sense, the

more important part is ruled by the concept of *faith*. Faith is not suggestion. Faith is not a joke. However, I wonder: is faith a mental state? ... I am sure about it. We do bless ourselves, and we do condemn ourselves. It is our chance and fate, it our decision. We are the sculptors of our feelings and of our lives. On the "opposite" side, we have the will, and this is for me the more powerful we have. Faith can construct will, and in fact that is its function. The next step is to realize it. Jesus cured because people did transform their faith into will, and *voilà*, the curations arose. This is why for God everything is possible, because in essence God/s -is/are- inside of us.

The best example should be given by the case of a shaman who is a visionary, an illuminated one and a priest too. And so, he is also an expert in herbs and in mythology, so to speak: a master in *altered states of consciousness*. For this, he uses plants called "hallucinogens", I do prefer the term -entheogens- or, magic plants. Due to the action of these plants he has visions, and thanks to it he translates the world into a mythical universe. On the other side, besides those teachings we can find a series of rites, which are directed toward common people: peyote meetings, for instance, and during the antiquity, we could learn about the Eleusinian cults in Greece among others. The latter, people used to go to drink the *kykeon* or magic potion made of mushrooms. In fact, many poets and philosophers used to go to Eleusis just to drink and experience the sacred mushrooms, and so to see the another reality, which gave them the sources to build their works and philosophies. Marcus Aurelius was among them, Plato and Virgilius as well.

With all this elucidation I only wish to state that is not necessary to be a shaman to write poetry or to experience ecstasy. **Neither is it necessary to use "hallucinogens" for it**, but is it necessary to be under an altered state of consciousness, no matter how you reach it. It should be interesting and very ravelling to research what path was used by San Juan de la Cruz in order to reach his visions. First, do we must claim that Christianity would deny that this Carmelite monk drank a potion? This is very possible. Notwithstanding, I think that this saint talks to us about visions and mystic union -*not* metaphorically-. In this manner: either he was a paranoid, or he was lying, or he really saw something. How did he it?

Although, on the other hand, we must be aware about the fallacies of mind, in his poetry we can locate a batch of references on plants and their action. While there is no total evidence *ad hoc*, and there are no conclusive proofs that San Juan de la Cruz did drink a potion or anoint himself with an unguent, I believe we can see some reflections about this in his poetry, where he tries to explain his mystical sentiments. I know this is provocative but we should at least, consider it.

In short, we might sum it up in these questions:

- 1 - How did San Juan de la Cruz arrive to his knowledge? I mean, to that mystical knowledge.
- 2- Is that mental state truthful? or, Is it only a product of illusion-imagination?
- 3- What is the relation between the illumination in a shaman and that in a saint?
- 4- The power to heal. Where is that knowledge and where it come from? If faith plays a role: Is faith a mental state?

With the first question, I shall attempt to research the possibility that San Juan de la Cruz took a potion in order to see another reality. I have used the context of his poetry for answering this item. With the second, I will assume the possibility that either Juan de la Cruz had an entheogen and only discussed opinions, or he had not had the potion and only saw entities under his tricky mind. Although I shall consider the chance that mind could approach determinate states of consciousness where there is some truth without drinking potions. The third question arrives at this point: Could we compare the mystical illumination with the shamanistic knowledge? Is the shaman an illuminated person? In the fourth question, I wonder if the great saints who were able to heal, could have been in possession of some kind of shamanistic lore.

The Word has arrived to me many times,
many times It entered inside me and,
sometimes I did not notice Its arrival,
but I perceived Its presence and I can remember it.
When I even have had a premonition of Its arrival,
I never felt It neither I felt Its departure.
Where It came to my soul from?
Where did It go when left it?

SAINT BERNARD

Juan de la Cruz and the Entheogens.

As above stated, we might find in St. John's poetry a series of metaphors and allusions to what could be understood as "hallucinogenic" potions, that is, entheogens. Primarily, we are going to analyze the "Cantico Espiritual " (Spiritual Canticle), and for it I have used the manuscript from Jaen (Spain), dating from-1.670's. Juan de la Cruz is looking for divine knowledge, mystical *sapientia*. He says there are three levels to reach God, which the soul has to penetrate. Afterwards, the soul will marry God. These three levels are as follow:

- a- La via purgativa (purgative road).

b- La via iluminativa (illuminative road).

c-La via unitiva (unitive road).

The *purgative* is for beginners; the *illuminative* is characterized by “el desposorio espiritual” (spiritual betrothal); and the *unitiva* is the marriage, that is to say, the perfection road. Through these levels he climbs to a divine sphere. And so, he states:

“A dónde te escondiste, Amado, y me dexaste con gemido?”⁴

Here there is a relation lover-loved, where the loved (God) is hidden, full of mystery and veiled to the human eye:

"Cayendo el alma en la cuenta de lo que está obligada a hazer viendo que la vida es breue, la senda de la vida eterna estrecha, que el justo apenas se salva, que las cosas del mundo son uanas y engañosas, que todo se acaba y falta, como el agua que corre, el tiempo incierto, la cuenta estrecha (...) conociendo por otra parte la gran deuda que á Dios deue en auerle criado solamente para sí, por lo cual le deue el servicio de toda su vida(..) renunciando todas las cosas..."⁵

In this fragment we can check the sanjuanista sentimentality, that is, his spiritual feelings. In regard to the entheogens, I will start with the paragraphs of his poetry followed by his own explanation, and afterwards I will introduce my thesis.

"Oh bosques y espesuras, (*Oh woods and thickets*
Plantadas por la mano del Amado, *Planted by the Beloved's hand,*
O prado de verduras, *Oh meadow with greenery,*
De flores esmaltado, *Adorned with flowers,*
Dezid si por vosotros a passado." *Tell (me) if he has passed your way"*)

There is here a refined pantheism and a dialogue between poet and Nature. His explanation is as follows:

⁴ This manuscript is published by Editorial Espasa-Calpe, in 1969. The quote can be found on page 18. The translation in english is as follows:

*"Where did you hide,
Beloved, leaving me languishing?"*

The translation into English has been made by professor Fred F. Jehle. Associate professor of Spanish. Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne. I am much indebted for his help.

⁵ Op. cit., pag. 19-20. *"The soul, realizing what she is obliged to do seeing that life is short, the path of eternal life narrow, that just person is saved only with difficulty, that the things of this world are vain and deceitful, that everything comes to an end and fails, like the water that runs, time (is) uncertain, accounting (is) strict, (...) knowing on the other hand the great debt that owed to God for having made her for him alone, because of which she owes him the service of her whole life (...), renouncing everything..."*

"... aora en esta Canción comienza a caminar por la consideración y conocimiento de las criaturas al conocimiento de su Amado, criador dellas (..) las cosas invisibles de Dios de el alma son conocidas por las cosas visibles criadas é invisibles. Habla pues, en esta Canción el alma con las criaturas preguntándoles por su Amado(..) Y es assí en esta canción se contiene la consideración de los elementos y de las demás criaturas inferiores y la consideración de los cielos... ""

"Now in this song she begins to progress from the consideration and knowledge of creatures to the knowledge of her Beloved, the creator of them (...) the invisible things of God are known from the visible and invisible things of creation. The soul thus speaks in this song with the creatures, asking them about her Beloved (..) And thus it is that this song includes the contemplation of the elements and of the other lower creatures and the contemplation of the heavens..."

On one side we have pantheism, but on the other , do we see a dialogue with the Work of God, that is, Nature. We could consider that relation "man-nature" as divine emanation : the mystical experience given only under the form of being starving for God. Another point of view would be the beauty and the goodness as divine essence of God:

" Oh prado de verduras, *"Oh meadow of greenery,*
de flores esmaltado, *Adorned with flowers,"*

The vegetarian allusions offers two parallelisms: -verdura- (green vegetables), and - flores- (flowers). The first emphasizing the concept of eating, and the second bears the concept of entheogens. According to Juan de la Cruz :

"Por las quales flores entiende los ángeles y almas sanctas con las quales esta ordenado aquel lugar y hermozeado con un gracioso y subido esmalte en un vaso de oro (glass of gold) excelente."⁶

"These flowers stand for the angels and holy souls with which that place is decorated and made beautiful by means of a pleasing and bright enamel on an exquisite glass of gold."

Juan de la Cruz talks about a celestial region by matting a comparison with flowers and its beauty. Hereupon, I see two relevant aspects with shamanistic context:

⁶ Pag. 52-53.

#1: the flowers as metaphor of angels and souls.

#2: to allude to -un vaso de oro- (gold glass)

#1: This is a typical distinction in the primigenum (“primitive”) mind, that is to say specially determined plants have special spirits inside of them, sometimes certain kind of god who drives us to the world of the Gods. It is notoriously peculiar that a soul reduced to a mystical state of observation would see in the same way as ancient cultures or primary minds. Therefore, the similarities are interesting.

#2: Here we have a clear mysteric connotation. Entheogenic cultures use their own paraphernalia, and their own beadworks to carry with them when they take those entheogenic potions. "A gold glass" might mean a mystic-material object used to drink some kind of magic potion. One thing is sure: If Juan de la Cruz did not drink a potion, at least he seems to be cognizant of what a soul feels when it is touched by a divine liqueur... The next strophe is useful:

“Detente, cierzo muerto, (*Stop, dead north wind,*
 Ven, austro que recuerdas los amores, *southern wind that recalls loves, Come*
 Aspira por mi huerto, *Breathe on garden,*
 Y corran sus olores, *And let its fragrances run about,*
 Ypacerá el Amado entre las flores.” *And the Beloved will graze among the flowers.”*)

There is esoteric meaning in the metaphor -alma-huerto- (soul-garden) as a reference to smooth odor, that is to say he is talking about *virtue*. The last verse “*Y pacerá entre las flores*” (And the Loved shall graze among flowers)⁷ reminds me of the typical comparison that the shamanistic mind uses certain kind of metaphors in order to name the entheogens. Juan de la Cruz explains it in this way:

“Significa el alma este deleite, que el Hijo de Dios tiene en ella en esta sazón, por nombre de pasto, que muy más al propio lo dá á entender, por ser el pasto comida cosa que no sólo da gusto, pero aun sustenta(..) lo que pace es la misma alma, transformándola en sí, estando ya ella guisada, salada y sazónada con las dichas flores de virtudes y dones, y perfecciones, que son la salsa con que y entre que la pace. Las cuales, por medio del aposentador ya dicho, están dando al Hijo de Dios savuor y suabidad en el alma, para que por medio se apaciente más en el amor

⁷ For instance, the Aztecs used to call “flowers” to the entheogens, among them the hallucinogenic mushrooms. To this respect and for this information see R.G. Wasson: *El Maravilloso Hongo de Teonanacatl*. Editorial F.C.E., oag. 89 ss.

della; porque esta es la condición del Esposo, unirse con el alma entre la fragancia destas flores.”⁸

“This delight, which the Son of God enjoys in her at this moment, signifies the soul, using the term grazing, which expresses the idea very appropriately, because grazing or food is something which not only gives pleasure, but also sustains (..), the thing that he consumes is the soul herself, changing her into himself after she has been prepared, salted and seasoned with the above-mentioned flowers of virtues and gifts, and perfections, which are the sauce with and in which he consumes her. These, through the already mentioned pasture, give the soul taste and tenderness for the Son of God, so that he is nourished more by her love; because this is the nature of the Spouse: to join himself with the soul in the fragrance of these flowers.”

It is amazing how this passage keeps some similitude with the entheogenic accounts. *Grosso modo*, I understand this as the poet's anima (soul) exposing his virtues to his Loved (God). Thus, the Esposo (Husband) -this is the Verbo (Word)-, by this action he (the poet) invokes the Espiritu Sancto (Holy Ghost) to intercede with God. And so, the soul, the Esposa (Wife) wishes to feel the mediate presence of Logos (Word):

“... lugar donde está escondido el Hijo de Dios es, como dize San Juan de la Cruz, el seno del Padre, que es la Esencia diuina, la cual es ajena a todo ojo mortal y escondida de todo humano entendimiento...”⁹

“... place where the Son of God is hidden, as Saint John of the Cross says, the bosom of the Father, which is the divine Essence, which is foreign to every mortal eye and hidden from every human understanding...”

The presence of Logos-Word is in the garden(soul), but to accede to Its presence, one must first aspirate through the garden and so, the scents of God shall go into us:

“...lo que pace es la misma alma...”

“...what he consumes is the soul herself.”

Obviously "to graze" is to eat herbs-grass. Hence, this implies that soul is eating certain herb, (maybe hemp?) Keeping in mind that the Muslim called "the herb", and that Juan de la

⁸ Pag. 146-147, San Juan de la Cruz text in Espasa-Calpe.

⁹ Foreword to this manuscript at Jaén by Fray Salvador de la Cruz (dated in 1.670); Espasa-Calpe edition, page 21.

Cruz had many Muslim influences), and, through it, the anima(soul) feels the divinity or essence of the Word, that is the hieratic presence of the son of God. In short:

- soul-garden
- virtues-flowers
- essence-son of God-Word
- Loved-God
- Husband-Word
- Wife-soul's poet

Consequently, it is possible to think that Saint John of the Cross could have drunk some entheogen, which steered him to the realm of ecstasy:

“... estando ella(el alma) guisada, salada y sazonada con las dichas flores de virtudes y dones...”

“... after she (the soul) has been prepared, salted and seasoned with the above-mentioned flowers of virtues and gifts...”

We must clarify that the concept of flor (flower) is an equivalent to the concept of virtud (virtue). In the same way, that concept is a cosmo-ecstatic metaphor that states the soul is “guisada” (cooked). Thereby, this metaphor is conceptualized as an entheogen, which is prepared to be swallowed. I must clarify if Juan de la Cruz took this mixture, I believe he did so once. For example, Juan de la Cruz as Saint John Apostle in the Apocalypse, had ecstasies of entheogenic type. This quotation is very relevant:

“With that, the Spirit possessed me and I saw a throne standing in heaven, and the One who was sitting on the throne, and the Person sitting there looked like a diamond and a ruby.”¹⁰

In another passage, Juan de la Cruz says about this entheogen:

“...están dando (las flores) al Hijo de Dios saour y suabidad en el alma, para que por medio se apaciente ... porque esta es la condición del Esposo, unirse con el alma entre la fragancia destas flores.”

¹⁰ Apocalypse IV:2-4

“...(the flowers) give the soul taste and tenderness for the Son of God, so that he is nourished ... because this is the nature of the Spouse: to join himself with the soul in the fragrance of these flowers.”

Further on, we find these interesting passages:

“A zaga de tu huella, *Following your footsteps*
 las jóvenes discurren al camino, *The young girls wander along the path*
 al toque de centella, *Touched by a spark,*
 al adovado bino, *And seasoned wine*
 Emisiones del balsamo diuino.” *Emitted by the divine balm.*”

This is a clearer allusion to entheogens, mainly, to an unguent called -balsamo diuino- (divine unguent) which might have been made from mandrake or henbane.

“En la interior bodega, “in the inner cellar
 De mi amado bebí y cuando salía -*Of my beloved I drank, and when I wandered out*
 por queste vega, *Through that meadow,*
 ya cosa no sabía, *I no longer knew anything,*
 y el ganado perdí que antes seguía. *And I lost the flock I had followed before.*”

With regard to this Canticle XXVI, I will quote this provoking construction:

“De mi Amado bebí...” (*from my Beloved I drank ...*)
 “...y quando salía...” (*... and when I wandered out (from myself..)*)

In both expressions we can see the entheogenic presence: an entheogenic potion called “mi Amado” (my Loved) and, because of its effect the soul detaches itself from the body, and contemplating the purity of that divine presence. Due to drinking from the Loved, Juan de la Cruz explains:

“Porque assí como la bebida se diffunde y derrama por todos los miembros y benas del cuerpo, assí se diffunde esta comunicación de Dios substancialmente en toda el alma, ó mejor dezir el alma se transforma en Dios; según la qual transformación bebe el alma de su Dios según la substancia della y según sus potencias espirituales...”¹¹

¹¹ Pag. 202

“Because just like a drink extends and spreads through all the members and veins of the body, so this communication with God spreads through the whole soul, or better, the soul is transformed into God; according to this transformation, the soul drinks from her God, according to her nature and spiritual capacities...”

Here we have two complementary elements: the transformation of soul into God, and the action of drinking the essence of something divine:

“La razón es, porque aquella bebida de altísima sabiduría de Dios que allí bebe, le haze olvidar todas las cosas del mundo, y le parece al alma, que lo que antes sabía y aun lo que saue todo el mundo, en comparación de aquel sauer es pura ignorancia.”¹²

“The reason is that that drink of the highest wisdom of God which she drank, makes her forget everything of this world, and it seems to the soul that what she used to know and even what the whole world knows, is in comparison with that knowledge pure ignorance.”

Juan de la Cruz has been emulating certain passages from the Bible, especially Song of the Songs, Saint John Apostle, and the Book of Job. My perspective is that it is possible to think that an entheogenic lore is included in those passages. It should not be surprising to say that entheogens like mandrake are mentioned in the Bible and, the -mosto de granadas- (pomegranate must) is cited in Song of Songs. Also, this suggests to me that Adam's Apple is the mandrake's fruit, which because of my own experience I know it is small, pinkish and with an strong odor like strawberry; Also some scholars have suggested the mushroom called *amanita muscaria*. These “fruits” produce an intensive state of sleepiness when are eaten, excepting the mushroom. In fact, the pomegranate is a biologically evolved fruit from *Papaver Rhoeas* (poppy) ... a plant that drives us to the world of the Gods. As Juan de la Cruz says:

“... entrar en aquellas cabernas ... que ella(el alma) siempre auía pretendido...”¹³

“... to enter those caverns ... which she (the soul) had always sought...”

“...O Esposo mío! en el día de tu eternidad, quando tuuiste por bien determinar de criarme, me darás luego allí en el mi día de mi desposorio y mis bodas ... y entrándome en las

¹² Pag. 205.

¹³ Pag. 278.

subidas cabernas de tu tálamo, transformándome en tí gloriosamente, bebamos el mosto de las suaues granadas.»¹⁴

“...Oh my Spouse! On the day of your eternity, when you considered it good to create me, you will then give me there on the day of my engagement and wedding ... and when I enter the sublime caverns of your wedding bed, transforming myself gloriously into you, let's drink the sweet pomegranate juice.”

By all means that mind could create such poetry without any entheogen, but the truth and the essence would be different. The power of mind is so tantalizing that I shall analyze the potency of curing in the saints, showing mind as the most important element.

O lamp of day
And light of Zeus,
Another life,
Another lot
Henceforth be mine.
Loved light, farewell.
EURIPID

Shaman-Illuminated: the parallel.

The question about whether mind can approach mental states so as to reach that which has been called -illumination-, is very difficult to answer if we do not first examine the shaman-illuminated complex. I have claimed and supported the idea that mind has possibilities and faculties to invent and believe its own inventions. If mind under autosuggestion is able to cure the body, my thesis is that mind is able to reach mental states such as apparent illumination, which is empty of truth. This kind of illumination is just a product of the swindle of our mind and consciousness. One could be experiencing "God", when actually is not God but plainly mind's illusion. This is not true illumination, and an example arises from T.V. where some ministers believe to be in some source of power given directly by God, this kind of people – mainly in the U.S tv. shows, tell to us not only about how to trick people, but also how to see a good example of not being illuminated or gifted by God.

Many anthropologists have observed how shamanism presents features close to what could be considered as an illumination state. Michael Hamer¹⁵ says that in the Jívaro culture, shamans are seen by other shamans like a shining person who irradiate light from her/his head:

¹⁴ Pag. 284.

¹⁵ Hamer, M. : *La Senda del Chamán*. Editorial Swan. Madrid, 1987; pag. 52.

Is not this a suggesting similarity with the halo of light that saints have over their heads? We must not forget that this halo is only seen when the other shaman is under the effects of *trance*. It is possible that those saints who had faculties to heal were visionaries with shamanistic powers. On the other hand, it is also possible that the power of mind could cure by autosuggestion. In this last case, we are aware of many "saints" who are supposed to have reached divine powers, but actually they only are just self-deceived. Their minds believe only appearances close to paranoia, and with a strong feeling of making money, for instance those so-called "ministers".

Curiosuly, a parallelism has been suggested between schizophrenic behavior and shaman behavior (*ecstasis*), indeed saintly behavior. Of course, not every schizophrenic has powers to see, namely, to be illuminated. On the other hand, not every schizophrenic is illuminated, and not every illuminated is schizophrenic. Yet, true illumination could seem close to schizophrenia, mainly if it is experienced under *trance*. This fact does not make saints or shamans schizophrenics. Aristotle already marked the similarities between the behavior of a drunk person and that of prophetic enthusiasm¹⁶. I do not like these kinds of comparisons, but they are commonly made. Indeed, we do know saints, at least some of them went to deserts or forests to get their visions and helper spirits. By this way, *illumination will be the faculty of seeing under darkness*, and from it reaches the truth, the essence of everything. Was San Juan de la Cruz illuminated? In what way? This is a pretty naive question because it is impossible to know, we can only conjecture. He said to have seen God several times.

Those men more spirituals,
 Supposing they are the bravest,
 They are who live the hurtful tragedies too: but,
 They revere life because this face up to them with the biggest of its hostilities.

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

Saints who Heal.

Considering saints who have passed into history due to their curing abilities, I will say either they had some shamanistic power, or people cure themselves by means of the power of their minds, so-called "power" that is canalized thanks to faith. Additionally, the faith is a mental state that functions as regulator of the body. My thesis is that mind can be so powerful that it could accomplish health as well as disease. Churches call all this faith, but actually it is a manifestation of *will*. Perhaps, is it a matter of language. Where is the difference between faith and *will*? My focus is that faith is located in consciousness, that is to say, in mind (scientifically, in brain). Brain will excrete all kind of hormones, endorphins that operate on

¹⁶ Aristóteles: *El Hombre de Genio y la Melancolía*. Editorial Quaderns Crema. Barcelona, 1996.

pain and disease. Biologically this is one of the functions of endorphins. However, *will* is not located in consciousness or brain. No scientific model will trap *will* in its microscope. *Will* is metaphysics, not physics. *Will* is God itself, and it is inside of me. *Will* is soul, spirit. Shaman uses his/her *will* to heal/cure in most cases, sometimes the faith of the patient cures himself/herself. The problem is to determinate when a shaman or a saint is using his/her *will* in order to cure and, when the faith of a patient does not need the help from those. I am inclined to believe that *faith-will* is the most powerful tool that human beings have. The scope of this curing ceremony in Christian context came up under two situations: the power of mind, I mean, the mind of the patient (this is decisive), and the power of *will*, that is the *will* of the saint or shaman. Yet, the patient does not know -yet- that his/her faith has been turned into *will* thanks to the help of the saint. Primarily, the person under autosuggestion could get health without any power from the "medicine man". The second point is that saints catch their power in the same way as has been pointed out within the shamanistic teachings. They exposed themselves to extreme situations: loneliness in desert or wilderness, fasting, peregrinations; and in most cases all this has its model in these shamanistic structures. Now the new problem would be if mind creates this power as only suggestive or, if it finds it and uses it for specific purposes. I assume some saints went to deserts, forests for fasting and praying and so on: consequently they got their visions. Then, from their visions they acquired the power to heal. It is interesting to note how many saints or even pilgrims used to go with a large cane, where this cane had attached a little gourd. This is a shamanistic tradition that represents the magic wand-main stalk, and the gourd is the place where every spirit (a helper) is kept. Independently of the power of shamans, mind and consciousness are able to approach mental states in proximity to those exceptional states. Conclusively, it is easy to understand the action of curing oneself modifying pain and controlling the disease. There are many kind of exercises which could give us the capacity to undertake this task. For instance, exercises like yoga or meditation among them.