



The promises and pitfalls of facilitated spiritual experiences for the study of religion

Jonathan Morgan

To cite this article: Jonathan Morgan (2022): The promises and pitfalls of facilitated spiritual experiences for the study of religion, Religion, Brain & Behavior, DOI: [10.1080/2153599X.2022.2091008](https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2022.2091008)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2022.2091008>



Published online: 13 Jul 2022.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



The promises and pitfalls of facilitated spiritual experiences for the study of religion

Jonathan Morgan

Psychology Department, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO, United States

Introduction

In the early years of religious studies, religious and spiritual experiences (RSEs) were a central topic of research. *Varieties of Religious Experiences* (James, 1902) was followed by Otto (1917), Eliade (1957), and others (e.g., Hardy, 1979; Smart, 1969; Stace, 1961; Zaehner, 1969). These scholars varied in their methods and motivations, but they all took RSEs seriously, as a central aspect of people's lived religiosity. These efforts were controversial at the time and remain so today in a field where RSEs are largely a peripheral object of study.

I mention the contentious and secondary role of RSEs within religious studies because Wildman and Stockly's *Spirit Tech* describes emerging technologies that could radically transform the way we study RSEs and thereby change the role these experiences play in our understanding of religion. The authors present an engaging foray through what they call the Scattered Supermarket of Special Spiritual Services. Along the way we meet the various teams, comprised of academics, religious practitioners, engineers, and clinicians, at the forefront of each spiritual service. This personalized introduction makes for an accessible approach to the various complex technologies involved. But, the human side of these spiritual services is complemented by technical expertise and philosophical rigor, which becomes especially clear in the appendices.

The main purpose of my commentary is to expand on Appendix 2, which traces the history and challenges of studying RSEs. I argue that the technologies explored in *Spirit Tech* have the potential to give researchers an unprecedented level of control over RSEs, which in turn will open new lines of inquiry into these intense experiences and the functional role they play within religious systems. But, the relevance of these technologies for our understanding of RSEs is also fraught with pitfalls, particularly the risk of narrowing existing categories and obscuring that which cannot be controlled. In order to truly overcome these limitations a radically interdisciplinary approach will be necessary.

Current approaches to RSEs

Advocating for interdisciplinary approaches to RSEs is not novel (e.g., Taves, 2009; Wildman, 2011), but successful examples are rare. This incongruity is likely due to deep ideological and methodological differences that can derail such conversations. In the case of RSEs, the two disciplines that have the most to offer also have the most divergent perspectives on the phenomenon.

Religious studies scholars who are grounded in the humanities typically follow Proudfoot's (1987) example by emphasizing that the particularities of one's cultural context permeate RSEs. This commitment to the mediated character of RSEs may seem overly particularistic since it fore-stalls cross-context comparisons, but that is largely the point (Katz, 1978). These scholars were responding to work that was motivated by a seemingly theological search for a core essence of these experiences. This pivot has generated a rich set of ethnographic accounts of everyday

RSEs, as exemplified by the current push towards “lived religion” (see Knibbe & Kupari, 2020). My main focus is on the potential of these technologies to transform methods in the scientific study of religion, but I note these particularistic approaches because they may help overcome the pitfalls that arise when deploying these technologies to study RSEs.

While scholars in the humanities deliberately avoid generalizations, scientific approaches unabashedly pursue such integrative work. In the scientific study of religion, RSEs have remained a viable topic of study, spawning a variety of methods and theories that can roughly be organized into phenomenological and neurological approaches. While both approaches have made substantial strides, they are both hampered by the intrinsic difficulties of studying RSEs. In particular, the type of evidence relevant to RSEs creates a methodological gap between the inquiry and its object (Andersen et al., 2014). In the following reviews I am going to focus on that gap and the ways in which the technologies described in *Spirit Tech* may radically narrow or even eliminate it altogether.

Phenomenological classifications

In Appendix 2, Wildman and Stockly review some of the surveys used to quantify and characterize RSEs. The most prominent is Hood’s Mysticism scale (1975), which draws explicitly from Stace’s (1961) philosophical work to focus on eight aspects of RSEs, such as experienced unity, ineffability, or timelessness. Researchers then use factor analyses to explore how these facets cluster (e.g., Caird, 1988; Hood et al., 1993; Reinert & Stifler, 1993). Different scales tap into different sorts of RSEs, but the common result of this approach is a system of classifying RSEs by characteristics highlighted by the scales. A common critique is that these scales are limited by the cultural context of the developers. As Wildman and Stockly note, the Mysticism scale and many of its contemporaries, such as the Nearness to God scale (Gorsuch & Smith, 1983), often frame RSEs in Judeo-Christian terms. But this critique is becoming less germane as researchers are constructing more general phenomenological inventories as described in Appendix 2 (Wildman & Mcnamara, 2010).

For our purposes, the more serious limitation is the type of data involved. These are taxonomies based on self-reports of RSEs after the experience itself. That is not to dismiss the validity or importance of this type of evidence, but simply to note that temporal distance allows for reinterpretation. The distance between the experience and the description could dramatically decrease, or vanish, if researchers begin to actively facilitate these RSEs.

This is already happening. Clinical trials on the potential therapeutic effects of psychedelics for substance use and mood disorders are well under way (Bogenschutz et al., 2015; Davis et al., 2021; Grob et al., 2011; Ross et al., 2016). Wildman and Stockly dig into this research in chapter 7, but I mention it here because many of these studies use phenomenological scales to track the qualities of participants’ experience while or directly after it occurs (e.g., Barrett et al., 2015). Doing so is critically important for understanding RSEs in process, and because the subjective qualities of these experiences may be a necessary component of psychedelics’ therapeutic effects (Yaden & Griffiths, 2021; though see Olson, 2021). If facilitated RSEs become a more common feature of research, we will see the gap between experience and report continue to shorten, leading to increasingly reliable phenomenological accounts of RSEs.

This solves one methodological issue but raises another. These phenomenological surveys guided the development of these technologies by helping developers target particular states of consciousness and then assessing the fit. In other words, these facilitated RSEs were calibrated by the surveys, which limits our capacity to generalize from them. This circularity, where instruments may define the phenomena they set out to study, becomes even more pronounced in neuroscientific approaches to RSEs.

Neuroscientific approaches

Over the past two decades, advances in neuroimaging have significantly advanced our understanding of RSEs (McNamara, 2009). This approach to RSEs attempts to find their neural correlates in order to

shed light on phenomenological and functional characteristics of these experiences. For example, Wildman and Stockly describe how the posterior cingulate cortex (PCC) is a consistent neural correlate of rumination or getting caught up thinking about one's self (see Brewer et al., 2013; Brewer & Garrison, 2014). This matters because neuroimaging studies find that meditation tends to down-regulate activity in the PCC, presumably facilitating an experience of equanimity (e.g., Garrison et al., 2013). This is just one example of work on the neural correlates of RSEs (see Tang et al., 2015). The common method across these research programs is to find neural correlates that can help to explain the type of experience (e.g., equanimity) and the functional consequences (e.g., emotional regulation).

This research often progresses in tandem with the technological developments that Wildman and Stockly describe. Work on the PCC and equanimity, for example, give researchers targets for transcranial Focused Ultrasound Stimulation (tFUS) in chapter 2. Other studies provide a template of goal states to guide the neurofeedback tech described in chapter 3. In turn, these manipulations provide a direct experimental test of the connection between these neural regions and the experience. This feedback loop between observational research and experimental research, is already accelerating research on RSEs.

This method can also help to partially resolve one of the main impediments for this approach to RSEs – what RSEs occur during a neural-imaging session? As the nuns in Beauregard and Paquette's (2006) study said – “God can't be summoned at will.” Even if you focus solely on RSEs that can be recreated in fMRI machines, one explanation for the preponderance of work on meditation, you still have to find expert practitioners. These technologies are already being used to resolve both of these issues by recreating RSEs within novices.

As with the phenomenological approaches, we also see trade-offs here. The potential for prematurely narrowing our scope is especially heightened with these neural interventions. As just noted, the RSEs for which we have neurological data is already limited. When we experimentally target specific states or neural regions, we are further restricting our focus onto singular processes or experiences. If our goal is to understand and foster equanimity, a laudable goal, then this is not a problem. But, if our goal is to understand RSEs, then this restricted focus places a serious limitation on our ability to generalize.

For both the phenomenological and the neuroscientific approaches, the technologies described in *Spirit Tech* have the potential to overcome long-standing limitations. But, the cost will be radically narrowing our scope of inquiry. This is an issue if our aim is to understand RSEs in a general sense. This narrowing focus, however, is not insurmountable. Generalization has been a constant challenge for RSE research and the solution is to remain clear about how we are constructing the category and to keep the category wide (Wildman & McNamara, 2008). In short, generalization is an inherently interdisciplinary endeavor.

The shift from DV to IV

The technologies described in *Spirit Tech* will change how we understand RSEs in many ways, but perhaps the most profound changes will come from the way they will provide control within this seemingly wild terrain. More specifically, gaining the ability to elicit certain RSEs allows a shift from studying them as an outcome to examining RSEs as an independent variable.

This shift is already occurring. As I noted above, research on the therapeutic effects of psychedelics are regularly producing new insights into these RSEs and how they are shaped by different compounds, settings, and expectations (Andersen et al., 2021). Importantly, however, in these studies the RSE is not the main outcome. Instead, the RSE is a predictor for mental health outcomes. If this clinical research is a harbinger of things to come, this opens the possibility studying both the determinants and the consequences of RSEs. Understanding the functional impact of RSEs has the potential to dramatically expand our models of RSEs and their role within religious systems.

Consider research on religion and health as an example. This field publishes thousands of articles each year, yet amidst this wealth of research, there is little to no place given to the role of RSEs in this relationship. For example, recent reviews by a prominent figure in the field do not mention

RSEs at all (Koenig, 2009; 2015). Instead, the theoretical and empirical focus is on the way religious/spiritual beliefs, behaviors, and community involvement impact health outcomes.

This is not to fault researchers for not engaging with a theoretically underdeveloped facet of religion and spirituality. Instead it is to note the potentially significant explanatory factor that is missing from our models. The suggestive findings that the subjective qualities of RSEs play a crucial role in their therapeutic effects (Yaden & Griffiths, 2021) indicates that some of the salubrious effects of religious and spiritual engagement may be mediated by the types of experiences cultivated by these practices.

If this all sounds speculative, that is because it is. We do not yet have a well-grounded sense of the impact that RSEs play in people's lives. My point here is to anticipate how an increased level of control over certain RSEs would give researchers an empirical foundation for understanding the social and personal consequences of RSEs. This foundation will not only shift our understanding of these experiences, but will also press on some of the central questions in the scientific study of religion.

Challenges and the need for interdisciplinarity

As I noted throughout, one of the primary shortcoming of creating RSEs for research into RSEs is that the circularity may prematurely narrow our scope of inquiry. Wildman and Stockly make a similar point by drawing on Whitehead's (1925/1997) fallacy of misplaced concreteness: the assumption that that which we can measure is that which is real. As we begin to insert more control over RSEs, we are likely to devote more attention to those RSEs that we can reproduce. This is practical and understandable, but we must ensure that it does not obscure the full range of the phenomena we set out to study.

The fuzzy category of RSEs is wildly diverse. It includes mystical experiences of oneness along with experiences of trance, possession, and hauntings for example (Laird et al., 2017). The category also includes more mundane but perhaps equally important experiences, such prayers (Luhmann, 2012; Schjoedt et al., 2009) or rituals (Austad & Muthert, 2021). The subset of RSEs that we end up reproducing will be acutely limited and non-representative. This only becomes a problem if we base our theories about RSEs primarily on these facilitated RSEs.

The resolution of this issue is fairly simple – first, keep our scope wide. Interdisciplinary engagement is one of the best ways to do so. Within religious studies there is a wealth of ethnographic material on everyday ritual and communal experiences that texture the more mundane end of this spectrum (Knibbe & Kupari, 2020). There are also large databases of RSEs under development, such as the Hardy RSE Project, which can help provide a needed breadth. With a broad scope, the second challenge becomes developing the theoretical bridges to link facilitated RSEs with their untamed counterparts.

On this second front, it is illuminating that when Schjoedt and Andersen (2017) named RSEs as a Hilbert problem for the scientific study of religion, they did not mention RSEs alone. Instead, they framed the challenge as integrating RSEs with the prevailing model of perception in the cognitive neurosciences: predictive processing (Clark, 2015; Frith, 2007). In other words, interdisciplinary engagement is not solely between the sciences and humanities, but also within the sciences more broadly. These conceptual bridges, built through interdisciplinary work, are crucial for our ability to place RSEs on a continuum with other experiences.

Finally, interdisciplinary engagement can also help us navigate the ethical dimensions of generating RSEs. The subset of RSEs targeted by these technologies is not randomly selected. They are selected due to their connection with particular ends: more focus, better health, equanimity, etc. These ends are laudable, but they are also shaped by social values and market forces. One part of the concern here is expressed by Bell Hooks: *"I am often struck by the dangerous narcissism fostered by spiritual rhetoric that pays so much attention to individual self-improvement and so little to the practice of love within the context of community"* (p. 76, 1999). We should attend to the forces

shaping which RSEs are made reproducible and how those RSEs may then shape our sense of the real purpose of these experiences.

From the perspective of the humanities, these technologies appear to be a continuation of spiritual commodification, in which “eastern” spiritual practices are sold with an aura of mysticism to US consumers (Carrette & King, 2004; Jain, 2014, 2020; Mehta, 1979). For example, Carrette and King (2004) track the ways that yoga was stripped of just enough ascetic, religious, and ethical dimensions to become a marketable exercise program in the US. Mindfulness meditation and other spiritual practices have gone through similar transformations to become palatable for the neo-liberal markets and concerns within the US (Lau, 2000).

The critical perspective of these scholars can sometimes slip into a righteous cynicism, but it provides a helpful contextual history to highlight what values are guiding these technologies and what values are being left out. This context is also crucial for empirical reasons. Understanding how these ends have emphasized certain characteristics and obscured others can provide a thread to keep these facilitated RSEs in contact with the broader category.

Wildman and Stockly leave these critical perspectives largely to the side, which allows for a pragmatic agnosticism about how these technologies will develop and how they will be used. Even if these technologies are part of a broader trend towards spiritual commodification, it does not rule out the experiences they generate as less authentic. If scholars discount these technologies simply because they are being sold, then they risk missing the ways that people will adapt the technologies to their own existential needs and concerns. Meaning is not given by the seller, it is constructed through the interactions people have with each other and these technologies.

The potential for these technologies to narrow our scope of inquiry due to their embedded values does not preclude them from being incredibly useful for researchers. So long as we remain attentive to the ways this may distort the types of RSEs being fostered and the broader range of RSEs that will likely remain untamed, then these tools could still dramatically accelerate our understanding of RSEs. Having a firmer understanding of RSEs could, in turn, allow them to join beliefs and rituals as a central topic within the scientific study of religion and religious studies more broadly. The advantage of returning RSEs to the table would be to provide a more accurate reflection of the importance these experiences play in religious systems and in the lives of religious and spiritual individuals.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

- Andersen, K. A. A., Carhart-Harris, R., Nutt, D. J., & Erntzoe, D. (2021). Therapeutic effects of classic serotonergic psychedelics: A systematic review of modern-era clinical studies. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 143(2), 101–118. <https://doi.org/10.1111/acps.13249>
- Andersen, M., Schjoedt, U., Nielbo, K., & Sørensen, J. (2014). Mystical experience in the lab. *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 26(3), 217–245. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700682-12341323>
- Austad, A., & Muthert, H. (2021). Introduction to the special issue “religious and spiritual experiences”. *Religions*, 12(5), 307. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12050307>
- Barrett, F. S., Johnson, M. W., & Griffiths, R. R. (2015). Validation of the revised Mystical Experience Questionnaire in experimental sessions with psilocybin. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 29(11), 1182–1190. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269881115609019>
- Beauregard, M., & Paquette, V. (2006). Neural correlates of a mystical experience in carmelite nuns. *Neuroscience Letters*, 405(3), 186–190. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neulet.2006.06.060>
- Bogenschutz, M. P., Forchimes, A. A., Pommy, J. A., Wilcox, C. E., Barbosa, P. C. R., & Strassman, R. J. (2015). Psilocybin-assisted treatment for alcohol dependence: A proof-of-concept study. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 29(3), 289–299. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269881114565144>

- Brewer, J. A., & Garrison, K. A. (2014). The posterior cingulate cortex as a plausible mechanistic target of meditation: Findings from neuroimaging. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1307(1), 19–27. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.12246>
- Brewer, J. A., Garrison, K. A., & Whitfield-Gabrieli, S. (2013). What about the “self” is processed in the posterior cingulate cortex? *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 7, 647. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2013.00647>
- Caird, D. (1988). The structure of Hood’s Mysticism Scale: A factor-analytic study. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 27(1), 122–127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1387407>
- Carrette, J., & King, R. (2004). *Selling spirituality: The silent takeover of religion*. Routledge.
- Clark, A. (2015). *Surfing uncertainty: Prediction, action, and the embodied mind*. Oxford University Press.
- Davis, A. K., Barrett, F. S., May, D. G., Cosimano, M. P., Sepeda, N. D., Johnson, M. W., Finan, P. H., & Griffiths, R. R. (2021). Effects of psilocybin-assisted therapy on major depressive disorder. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 78(5), 481. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.3285>
- Eliade, M. (1957). *The Sacred and the profane: The Nature of religion* (W. R. Trask, trans.). Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Frith, C. (2007). *Making up the mind: How the brain creates our mental world*. Blackwell.
- Garrison, K. A., Scheinost, D., Worhunsky, P. D., Elwafi, H. M., Thornhill, T. A., Thompson, E., Saron, C., Desbordes, G., Kober, H., Hampson, M., Gray, J. R., Constable, R. T., Papademetris, X., & Brewer, J. A. (2013). Real-time fMRI links subjective experience with brain activity during focused attention. *NeuroImage*, 81, 110–118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2013.05.030>
- Gorsuch, R. L., & Smith, C. S. (1983). Attributions of responsibility to God: An interaction of religious beliefs and outcomes. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 22(4), 340–352. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1385772>
- Grob, C. S., Danforth, A. L., Chopra, G. S., Hagerty, M., McKay, C. R., Halberstadt, A. L., & Greer, G. R. (2011). Pilot study of psilocybin treatment for anxiety in patients with advanced-stage cancer. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 68(1), 71–78. <https://doi.org/10.1001/archgenpsychiatry.2010.116>
- Hardy, A. C. (1979). *The spiritual nature of man: A study of contemporary religious experience*. Oxford University Press.
- Hood, R. W. (1975). The construction and preliminary validation of a measure of reported mystical experience. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 14(1), 29–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1384454>
- Hood, R. W., Morris, R. J., & Watson, P. J. (1993). Further factor analysis of Hood’s Mysticism Scale. *Psychological Reports*, 73(3_suppl), 1176–1178. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1993.73.3f.1176>
- Hooks, B. (1999). *All about love: New visions*. William Morrow.
- Jain, A. (2014). *Selling yoga: From counterculture to pop culture* (Illustrated edition). Oxford University Press.
- Jain, A. R. (2020). *Peace love yoga: The politics of global spirituality*. Oxford University Press.
- James, W. (1902). *The varieties of religious experience: A study in human nature*. Longman.
- Katz, S. T. (1978). *Mysticism and philosophical analysis*. Oxford University Press.
- Knibbe, K., & Kupari, H. (2020). Theorizing lived religion: Introduction. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 35(2), 157–176. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2020.1759897>
- Koenig, H. G. (2009). Research on religion, spirituality, and mental health: A review. *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 54(5), 283–291. <https://doi.org/10.1177/070674370905400502>
- Koenig, H. G. (2015). Religion, spirituality, and health: A review and update. *Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*, 29(3), 19–26.
- Laird, L. D., Curtis, C. E., & Morgan, J. R. (2017). Finding spirits in spirituality: What are we measuring in spirituality and health research? *Journal of Religion and Health*, 56(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-016-0316-6>
- Lau, K. J. (2000). *New age capitalism: Making money east of Eden*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Luhrmann, T. M. (2012). *When God talks back: Understanding the American evangelical relationship with God*. Vintage.
- McNamara, P. (2009). *The neuroscience of religious experience* (1 edition). Cambridge University Press.
- Mehta, G. (1979). *Karma cola: Marketing the mystic east*. Simon & Schuster.
- Olson, D. E. (2021). The subjective effects of psychedelics may not be necessary for their enduring therapeutic effects. *ACS Pharmacology & Translational Science*, 4(2), 563–567. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acspsci.0c00192>
- Otto, R. (1917). *The idea of the holy*. Oxford University Press.
- Proudfoot, W. (1987). *Religious experience*. University of California Press. <http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520061286>.
- Reinert, D. F., & Stifler, K. R. (1993). Hood’s Mysticism scale revisited: A factor-analytic replication. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 32(4), 383–388. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1387178>
- Ross, S., Bossis, A., Guss, J., Agin-Liebes, G., Malone, T., Cohen, B., Mennenga, S. E., Belsler, A., Kalliontzis, K., Babb, J., Su, Z., Corby, P., & Schmidt, B. L. (2016). Rapid and sustained symptom reduction following psilocybin treatment for anxiety and depression in patients with life-threatening cancer: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 30(12), 1165–1180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269881116675512>
- Schjoedt, U., & Andersen, M. (2017). How does religious experience work in predictive minds? *Religion, Brain & Behavior*, 7(4), 320–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2153599X.2016.1249913>

- Schjoedt, U., Stødikilde-Jørgensen, H., Geertz, A. W., & Roepstorff, A. (2009). Highly religious participants recruit areas of social cognition in personal prayer. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 4(2), 199–207. <https://doi.org/10.1093/scan/nsn050>
- Smart, N. (1969). *The religious experience of mankind*. Scribner.
- Stace, W. T. (1961). *Mysticism and philosophy*. Macmillan.
- Tang, Y.-Y., Hölzel, B. K., & Posner, M. I. (2015). The neuroscience of mindfulness meditation. *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 16(4), 213–225. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn3916>
- Taves, A. (2009). *Religious experience reconsidered: A building-block approach to the study of religion and other special things*. Princeton University Press.
- Whitehead, A. N. (1925). *Science and the modern world*. Free Press.
- Wildman, W. J. (2011). *Religious and spiritual experiences*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wildman, W. J., & McNamara, P. (2008). Challenges facing the neurological study of religious behavior, belief, and experience. *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, 20(3), 212–242. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006808X317455>
- Wildman, W., & Mcnamara, P. (2010). Evaluating reliance on narratives in the psychological study of religious experiences. *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 20(4), 223. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508619.2010.507666>
- Yaden, D. B., & Griffiths, R. R. (2021). The subjective effects of psychedelics are necessary for their enduring therapeutic effects. *ACS Pharmacology & Translational Science*, 4(2), 568–572. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acspsci.0c00194>
- Zaehner, R. C. (1969). *Mysticism, sacred and profane: An inquiry into some varieties of praeternatural experience*. Oxford University Press.