THE NATURE, OBJECTIVITY AND EXPRESSION OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE: With a Special Reference to Walter T. Stace and Steven T. Katz

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Introduction

In this article, I propose to examine the philosophical analysis of the nature, objectivity and expression of mystical experience and its implications through the lenses of practical discussions based on Stace's and Katz's arguments because of their central position in the field of mysticism and influence on the contemporary mystical debates. I will discuss the matter within the limits of their arguments and I will deal with the other scholars' thoughts as long as they are related to this limited subject. In this article, mystical experience is discussed according to Stace's conceptualization due to his valuable terminological contribution to mysticism. Both mysticism in Stace's studies and Stace in mysticism are of paramount significance. Stace's mystical experience excludes the religious experience due to his religious view. This should be grasped correctly and kept in mind throughout the article; besides, Stace is aware that mysticism is associated with religion. For this reason, he remarks that mysticism is an unfortunate word due to the fact that it suggests mist, foggy, confused or vague thinking and it also suggests mystery and miracle mongering. Despite these prejudices, Stace states the necessity of using the term 'mysticism' due to historical reasons.[1] According to Stace's terminology, mysticism includes both mystical experience and its interpretation. Hence, Stace distinguishes between what mysticism is and what mystical experience is.[2] Stace also points out

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1   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, Los Angeles, Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc., 1987, pp. 15-16.
2   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 36.

that mysticism has both theoretical and practical dimensions.[3] Moreover, it is worthwhile to note that Stace's mystical experience affirms the universal core as pure consciousness.

When it comes to Katz's understanding of mystical experience, it is quite different from Stace's. At first Katz starts his arguments by rejecting pure (i.e. unmediated) experience. Thus, he rejects mystical experience defined through universal core and he urges that mystical experience and also '*all* experience is processed through, organized by, and makes itself available to us in extremely complex epistemological ways.'[4] His understanding includes both mystical and religious experiences. According to Katz religion is a very important context as well as culture, language and education[5] and there is no universal referent for mystical experience. In line with this view we can see that Katz uses the word 'mysticism' and 'mystical experience' only with a practical aim in order to criticise Stace's arguments. It is alleged in this article that Katz's understanding of mysticism which is constructed by religion, culture, etc. is closer to religious experience compared to mystical experience.

Walter T. Stace's Arguments as regards the Nature, Objectivity and Expression of Mystical Experience

Stace asks an important question: 'Is there any set of characteristics which is common to all mystical experiences, and distinguishes them from other kinds of experience, and thus constitutes their universal core?'[6] This question is related to the nature of mysticism and the problem of universal core. Stace makes conceptual analysis of mystical experience by using this question. Hence, at first we have to ask what mystical experience is according to Stace. We find this definition in his complicated philosophical mysticism related to the universal core. Mystical experience is the experience of a unity that can be grounded as pure consciousness.[7] This is also the basic argument of Stace. According to Stace the central characteristic of mystical experience that distinguishes it from other experiences is the apprehension of *an ultimate non-sensuous unity in all things* and the central concept of mystical

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3   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 36-37.

4   Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, Ed. Steven T. Katz, New York, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 26.

5   Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 26; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", *Mysticism and Religious Tradition*, Ed. Steven T. Katz, New York, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 4.

6   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 43.

7   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 132.

experience is Oneness or a One.[8] Stace uses mystical experience as synonymous of mystical consciousness. As it is seen, according to Stace's terminology mystical experience, mystical consciousness, pure consciousness, and the experience of unity have the same meaning despite their nuance.[9]

Stace also is concerned with what mysticism is not. Because when *others* (experiences apart from mystical experience) leave, only *it* (mystical experience) remains. Visions, voices, telepathy, precognition and clairvoyance are not the mystical phenomena because of their relation with the sensory-intellectual consciousness. According to Stace, the experiences which have the character of sensuous imagery cannot be a mystical experience. Besides, he excludes conceptual content.[10] Stace excludes the sensual and conceptual content; afterwards he discounts the emotional content as hyper emotionalism. He also excludes abnormal bodily states as rapture or trance and sexual contents (love feelings) that can be interpreted as union with God.[11] Finally we can recognize that none of these experiences that Stace excludes has the universal core as the apprehension of an ultimate unity or 'One'. In brief Stace excludes senses, concepts, thoughts and emotions apart from specific occasions. Thus, we can say that Stace restricts his mystical experience with the experience of unity that can be found within inner essence of all mystical experience.[12]

According to Stace, mystical experience can be called mystical consciousness and this preference is better on the grounds that the other has misleading meanings in certain respects.[13] Stace deals with mystical consciousness as a form of experience.[14] We can see that Stace offers a new kind of consciousness for his mystical experience and he mentions two kinds of consciousness.[15] Stace grounds his concept through James's nitrous oxide experience. Stace mentions that James's finding as a result of James's psychological research fits his mystical consciousness.[16] James's conclusion is that 'our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call

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8   Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, New York, The New American Library, 1960, p. 14. Italic is Stace's.

9   Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 9.

10   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 49; *The Teachings of the Mystics*, pp. 13-14.

11   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 51-54.

12   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 51, 53, 132.

13   Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 9.

14   Christine Overall, "Mysticism, Phenomenalism, and W. T. Stace", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 18, 2, 1982, p. 187

15   Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, pp. 12-14; *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 281, 297.

16   Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 12.

it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different.'[17] And James determines the general traits of the mystic range of consciousness as pantheistic, optimistic, or at least the opposite of pessimistic and anti-naturalistic.[18] Stace thinks that the mystical consciousness is wholly different from ordinary consciousness. He tells about the fundamental characteristics of ordinary consciousness by an analogy with a three-floor building. The ground floor contains physical sensations and the second floor contains images as mental copies of sensations. The third and last floor contains intellect with its concepts on which abstract thinking and reasoning processes occur. This construction is sensory-intellectual consciousness.[19]

According to Stace, mystical experience that he entitled as pure consciousness is a new kind of consciousness without sensations, images, concepts and emotions. Then what would there be in this new (pure) consciousness?

> There would be no mental content whatever but rather a complete emptiness, vacuum, void. One would suppose a *priori* that consciousness would then entirely lapse and one would fall asleep or become unconscious… On the contrary, what emerges is a state of *pure* consciousness—"pure" in the sense that it is not the consciousness *of* any empirical content. It has no content except itself.[20]

Forman's 'a pure consciousness-event'[21], Smart's 'consciousness-purity'[22] and Almond's 'contentless experience'[23] support Stace's pure consciousness due to the fact that they all have similar meaning. After Stace grounds his mystical experience by means of pure consciousness, he determines two main types of mystical experience named the extrovertive mystical experience and the introvertive one. The former has been called the "outward way"

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17 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience; A Study in Human Nature*, London, Collins, 1971, p. 374.

18 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 407.

19 Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 12.

20 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 85-86.

21 Robert K. C. Forman, "Introduction: Mysticism, Constructivism, and Forgetting", *The Problem of Pure Consciousness; Mysticism and Philosophy*, Ed. Jensine Andresen and Robert K. C. Forman, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 39.

22 Ninian Smart, "The Purification of Consciousness", *Mysticism and Religious Tradition*, Ed. Steven T. Katz, New York, Oxford University Press, 1983, pp. 123, 127.

23 Philip C. Almond, "Mysticism and Its Contexts", *The Problem of Pure Consciousness; Mysticism and Philosophy*, Ed. Jensine Andresen and Robert K. C. Forman, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1990, pp. 216-218.

or the way of extrospection and the latter has been called the "inward way" or the way of introspection.[24] The extrovertive mysticism which is usually called as 'nature-mysticism' looks outward through the senses and finds there the One. The introvertive mysticism, on the other hand, looks inward into the mind to penetrate the depths of his own ego by shutting off the senses and finds there introspectively the One. Their method and reference points are different. However, they both are the same due to being the apprehensions of the One, that is, they both culminate in the experience of an ultimate Unity.[25] They both share the same common characteristics such as 'sense of objectivity or reality', 'blessedness, peace, etc.', 'feeling of the holy, sacred, or divine", paradoxicality' and 'alleged by mystics to be ineffable'. The extrovertive mystical experience has diversely the common characteristics of 'the Unifying Vision-all things are One' and 'the more concrete apprehension of the One as an inner subjectivity, or life, in all things'. And the introvertive mystical experience has diversely the common characteristics of 'the Unitary Consciousness; the One, the Void; pure consciousness' and 'nonspatial, nontemporal'.[26]

Right here, we can see explicitly via the definition that introvertive mystical experience is real and main mystical experience which fits in with Stace's purpose. In the history of mysticism the introvertive mysticism due to being the experience of an undifferentiated unity is the major way and the extrovertive mysticism due to having the physical senses at the beginning of the experience is the minor way. The extrovertive mysticism is incomplete and an incipient type of mysticism, whereas the introvertive mysticism is the complete one as the main subject of Stace's mysticism.[27]

As a consequence of conceptual analysis of Stace's terminology we find Stace's main claim of universal core. Stace determines the essential problem

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24 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 60-61. Stace's 'extrovertive mystical experience' has the same meaning with Otto's 'the mysticism of unifying vision', Underhill's 'the cosmic vision of infinity' and Jones' 'nature-mystical experience'. Besides his 'introvertive mystical experience' has the same meaning with Otto's 'the mysticism of introspection', Underhill's 'introversion' and Jones' 'depth-mystical experience'. For these terms see Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism: East and West: A Comparative Analysis of The Nature of Mysticism*, Çev. Bertha L. Bracey and Richenda C. Payne, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1932, pp. 39-43; Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: The Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness*, Oxford, Oneworld, 2002, pp. 250, 302-303. See also Chapter VI, VII in this book. Richard H. Jones, *Mysticism Examined: Philosophical Inquiries into Mysticism, Albany*, State University of New York Press, 1993, 1993, pp. 1-4.

25 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 61-62; Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 15. For detailed information and specific examples for extrovertive mysticism see Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 62-81; for introvertive mysticism see Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 85-111.

26   Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 78-79, 110-111, 131-132.

27 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 84-86; *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 15.

of his philosophical mysticism as the problem of universal core. Therefore, Stace's concepts including experience of unity, pure consciousness, undifferentiated unity, etc. and Stace's types of mystical experience, especially introvertive mystical experience, and the common characteristics of mystical experience are so important for the problem of universal core. Stace states that it is crucial to understand the problem of universal core through the facts not an *a priori* way .[28] According to him, we can't find a pure common core case shared by all mystical experiences and a pure family resemblance case. He means neither the one nor the other, 'but rather a mixture of the two which may be described as follows: there will be a central nucleus of typical cases which are typical because they all share an important set of common characteristics.'[29] As it is seen, universal characteristics make explicit universal core and it is deduced that there are similarities in all mystical experiences by the experience of the unity. Hence, Stace emphasizes that it is reasonable to mention the universal characteristics of mystical experiences instead of their universality.[30] Stace's universalism is defined as a strong form of phenomenological essentialism because he claims that 'all introvertive experiences are phenomenologically identical.'[31]

Stace's universal core of mysticism emphasizes the phenomenological similarities of mystical experiences in different times, places, cultures, ages and countries of the world.[32] According to Stace, the agreements as to mystical experience are more basic and important, and the disagreements as to mystical experience are more superficial and less important. And this fact can be justified by focusing on the reality and empirical surveys.[33] Stace explains the differences by using experience-interpretation distinction. It is important to distinguish between the experience and interpretation to understand the universal core of mystical experience since the differences are related to the interpretation. Stace uses the word 'interpretation' to mean anything which conceptual intellect adds to experience such as classificatory concepts, logical inferences and explanatory hypothesis.[34] This distinction can be classified in other terms like phenomenological content

28 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 46.

29 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 46.

30 Fatma Yüce, "Walter Terence Stace'in Felsefi Mistisizminin Tazammunları", *Doğudan Batıya Düşüncenin Serüveni*, 2. Press, 2017, p. 451.

31 Randall Studstill, *The Unity of Mystical Traditions: The Transformation of Consciousness in Tibetan and German Mysticism*, Boston, Brill Leiden, 2005, p. 256.

32 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 135.

33 Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics*, p. 14.

34 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 37.

and extra-experiential content[35], given and non-given[36] or pure experience and conceptual interpretation. Lastly, it is of great importance to note that Stace brings up different levels of interpretation of mystical experience in the form of a low-level interpretation and a high-level interpretation. According to Stace the experience of 'an undifferentiated distinctionless unity' is a low-level interpretation and the experience of 'God' is a high-level interpretation because the latter has an assumption and includes intellectual addition while the former is closer to be a mere experience.[37]

In view of the distinction between experience and interpretation, Stace claims that the Christian experience of 'union with God': *Unio Mystica*, the Jewish experience of Devekuth, the Muslim Experience of Fana: *Sufi Experience*, the Buddhist experience of Nirvana, the Hindu Experience of Brahman and the Taoist experience of Tao are all the same due to their pure content by explaining the differences as religious comments.[38] According to Stace there is strong agreement as strong evidence named the argument from unanimity in all these experiences. This argument (Broad and James previously support, too) on which we ought to rely for reliability of mystical experience has the universal and general agreement of witnesses apart from intentional fabrication and mis-description. According to this argument, if a mystic or several mystics say that they have experienced mystical experiences, they conceivably experience it.[39] With Stace's expressions the argument from unanimity is this:

> And if we find such independent reports coming from many diverse cultures, times, and countries of the world... this profoundly impressive agreement amounts to very strong evidence that the experiences were not misreported but were actually just what the mystics say they were.[40]

Stace states that although this argument doesn't guarantee the objectivity of mystical experience, it makes mystical experience reliable.[41] Mystical experience has reliability with its possibility of misapprehensions like sense experience.[42] With regard to the objectivity of mystical experience,

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35 L. Philip Barnes, "Walter Stace's Philosophy of Mysticism", *Hermathena*, No: 153, 1992, p. 12.

36 Christine Overall, "Mysticism, Phenomenalism, and W. T. Stace", pp. 183, 187.

37 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 37.

38 Katz reaches on the contrary the differences of mystical experience(s) on the basis of this example. This implication of Katz will be explicated exhaustively in section 3.

39 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 134-135.

40 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 147.

41 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 136-137.

42 We must rely on mystical experience as well as we must rely on sense experience, although it has

two important questions are here raised: 1. Is mystical experience objective like a sense experience or subjective like a psychological phenomenon? 2. Does mystical experience necessitate objective reference? First of all, we must notice that mystics themselves needn't use arguments for mystical experience's objectivity as they claim that the mystical experience has a 'sense of objectivity or reality' as a universal characteristic of mystical experience owing to an 'inner light'.[43]

Stace delimitates the word 'subjective' in that sense which is psychological phenomenon as hallucinations and dreams and the word 'objective' in that sense which is used for sense experience. Stace emphasizes that these words have a crucial importance in addition to their ambiguity.[44] According to Stace, mystical experience may be like perception instead of emotion as mystics mentioned 'though it is not denied that like all perceptions they have their own emotional tinge.'[45] So it must not be reduced to subjectivity of an emotion, a hallucination or a psychological phenomenon. Stace proposes philosophical explanation for mystical experience so he takes its objectivity into account. Nevertheless, he is aware that mystical experience is not as objective as sense experience.[46]

Stace's final decision is that mystical experience is neither subjective as the finite subject is in time nor objective as only objects in the space-time order are objective.[47] Afterwards he proposes a functional term 'trans-subjectivity'[48]. His answer about objective reference is also related to these words. According to Stace, in case of supposing the mystical experience is objective, we can also suppose the statements as regards Universal Self are true and so the Universal Self 'exists' and *vice versa*. Yet 'we concluded that mystical experience is neither objective nor subjective, we have to say that the Universal Self neither exists nor does not exist and the statements about it are neither true nor false.'[49] As is seen, Stace has an agnostic attitude per-

some mis-described examples like seeing objects yellow with santonin, mirage in the desert, experience of double vision after pushing one eye etc. See Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 135-136.

43 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 79, 110, 131, 134.

44 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 16.

45 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 15. Stace rejects Russell's claims that the essence of mysticism is emotion and the mystical experience is a kind of subjective experience. See Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 14-15.

46 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 27-28, 138.

47 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 196. For evaluation and criticism of Stace's idea on this topic see Wm. J. Wainwright, "Stace and Mysticism", *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 139-144.

48 For detailed information about this term see Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 146-152.

49 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 182-183. Another important question is here raised: Is

taining to Universal Self. Besides he expresses this by using Broad's phrase that it is 'more likely than not' that there is an objective reference.[50]

When it comes to the expression of mystical experience, we confront two important issues: logic and language. According to Stace, the laws of logic that provide understanding cannot be applied to mystical experience due to its objective reference: 'The Most High (Das Allerhöchste) can be neither self-consistent nor self-contradictory, because self-contradictoriness and its reverse are logical categories. The Most High (Das Allerhöchste) is neither logical nor illogical, but alogical.'[51] Stace mentions that mystical experience is beyond the reach of the intellect and understanding, above reason and without concepts.[52] This alogical area on which Stace based the mystical experience cannot be comprehended by mystics. This is a universal character of mystical experience that has been called 'paradoxicality' which mystics incorrectly call 'ineffability' due to the fact that they are poor logicians, philosophers and analysts.[53]

> The language is only paradoxical because the experience is paradoxical. Thus the language correctly mirrors the experience. But he had said first of his experience, "It is x." The next moment he finds himself compelled to say, "It is not-x." Hence he then supposes that his original statement "It is x" was wrong... Thus whatever he says seems to him to have been incorrect since he always has to contradict it. Thereupon he blames the language.[54]

Stace finds contradiction, as we can say 'theory-practice inconsistency' between mystics' attitudes that they have tried to tell about their experience with a grand literature and their utterances where they have said that their experience is ineffable. He chooses practical dimension in order to solve the contradiction, insists on the universal characteristic of paradoxicality and rejects the claim of ineffability alleged by mystics.[55] According to Stace the

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Universal Self a God? Stace reduces God to only an interpretation of Universal self so he doesn't affirm this question. Fanai affirms this question in his dissertation by noticing the similiar characteristics for Universal Self and God. See Mohammad Fanaei, *Walter Stace's Philosophy of Mysticism: A Critical Analysis*, Faculty of Religious Studies McGill University, 2000, pp. 135-137.

50 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 138.

51 Walter T. Stace, *Zeit und Ewigkeit: Ein Religionsphilosophischer Essay*, Frankfurt am Main, Lembeck, 1997, p. 183.

52 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 303.

53 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 306.

54 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 305.

55 Stace criticises the theory of rhetorical paradox, the theory of misdescription, the theory of double location and the theory of double meaning in that they try to solve paradoxical contradiction. See Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 253-265. According to Stace the claim of scientific revelations, com-

term 'ineffability' is only the name of a problem and can't reflect reality.[56] He mentions that 'If the mystical consciousness were absolutely ineffable, then we could not say so because we should be unconscious of such an experience; or in other words, we should never have had such an experience.'[57]

Steven T. Katz's Arguments as regards the Nature, Objectivity and Expression of Mystical Experience

Katz determines his basic research instead of mystical typology according to this question of 'why the various mystical experiences are the experiences they are.'[58] He starts his inquiry with a single epistemological presupposition: '*There are* NO *pure* (i.e. *unmediated*) *experiences*.'[59] Complicated epistemological ways like religion, culture, concepts, symbols, language, education, etc. preform, shape, process and generate mystical experience. Being 'mediated' of all experience including mystical experience is an important feature of any epistemological quest that is neglected by great mysticism researchers.[60] Short affirms this idea of Katz and adds that mediation '...is not a barrier to understanding, but the process of understanding'.[61] Gimello affirms Katz's idea too and regards mediations as the essence of mysticism.[62] According to Katz, 'the forms of consciousness which the mystic brings to experience set structured and limiting parameters on what the experience will be.'[63] All mystical experience has a contextual character. On the basis of this consideration Katz labelled his approach as 'Contextualism'[64], some critics of Katz labelled it as 'Constructivism'[65] and the root of

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mon-sense theories (the emotion theory, the spiritual blindness theory) and the view that mystical or religious language is symbolic are also inadequate to explicate the expression of mystical experience. See Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 278-294.

56 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 278.

57 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 291.

58 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 25-26; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 4.

59 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 26; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 4. Emphasis and italic are Katz's.

60 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 26; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 4.

61 Larry Short, "Mysticism, Mediation, and the Non-Linguistic", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 63, No: 4, 1995, p. 664.

62 Robert M. Gimello, "Mysticism in Its Contexts", *Mysticism and Religious Tradition*, Ed. Steven T. Katz, New York, Oxford University Press, 1983, p. 62.

63 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 26; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 5.

64 Steven T. Katz, "Mystical Speech and Mystical Meaning", *Mysticism and Language,* Ed. Steven T. Katz, New York, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 34.

65 Reza Shah Kazemi, *Paths to Transcendence: According to Shankara, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart*, Indiana, World Wisdom, Bloomington, 2006, p. 229.

Katz's contextualism depends on Kant's philosophy.[66]

In line with emphasis of 'mediated' experience, Katz rejects unmediated i.e. pure experience strictly and sees it epistemologically wrong: 'The notion of unmediated experience seems, if not self-contradictory, at best empty.'[67] According to Katz, Stace fails to understand 'the impossibility of pure experience and what this entails'[68] Because of this Katz warns us against an important epistemological fallacy:

> The metaphysical naiveté that seeks for or worse, asserts, the truth of some meta-ontological schema in which either the mystic or the student of mysticism is said to have reached some phenomenological 'pure land' in which he grasps transcendent reality in its pristine pre-predicative state is to be avoided.[69]

The constitutive epistemic element[70] which is related to the process of differentiation of mystical experience 'does not only take place in the post-experiential process of reporting and interpreting the experience itself: it is at work before, during and after the experience.'[71] As it is seen, the mystical experience is constructed before, during and after experience by conceptual context and other contexts. Contextual elements can be biography, biblical exegesis, aphorisms, manuals, theoretical and theosophical treatises, poems, polemics, dogma and didactic compositions. What one reads, learns, knows, and intends shapes his experience. Thus, there is a close connection between mystical experience and mystical education that includes what mystics use as mediations and will experience.[72]

Katz's arguments pertaining to the nature of mystical experience will proceed with the concept of new consciousness and the phenomenon which has been called 'a conservative character'. Katz's new consciousness, in contrast to Stace's, has contents due to the various mediations as teacher, models, texts, education etc. According to Katz, this mystical consciousness is a

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66 As Katz affirms, See Steven T. Katz, 'Responses and Rejoinders', *American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 56, No: 4, 1988, p. 757. Adam claims that Kant affects Stace as well as Katz. See Martin A. Adam, 'A Post-Kantian Perspective on Recent Debates About Mystical Experience', *A Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 70, No: 4, 2002, pp. 801-817.

67 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 26; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 4.

68 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 28.

69 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 41.

70 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 4.

71 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 27.

72 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 6.

new kind of 'mediated' consciousness which 'moves us from consciousness A (ordinary awareness) to consciousness B (mystical awareness).'[73] Mystical experiences resulting from a pre-conditioned consciousness have an important quality as 'conservative phenomenon' which is connected with the different religious traditions.[74] Katz does not propose a new typology, he only tries to correct epistemologically present conceptualization -especially Stace's conceptualization- by emphasizing the effect of religion, culture and other mediations and criticises it. For his first-order interest is the epistemology of mysticism.[75]

Contrary to Stace's claim of similarity of mystical experience and universal core, Katz finds differences between mystical experiences and emphasizes that there are many different mystical experience(s) instead of one universal and same mystical experience. According to Katz mystical experiences are apparently similar but actually different. This apparent similarity is rooted in the surface grammar of the mystical reports and misleads the mystics and researchers that support universal core mysticism.[76] After minimising similarity, Katz states his ultimate aim as a "plea for the recognition of differences."[77] Katz rejects Stace's experience-interpretation distinction. According to him, mystical experience itself has the interpretive structure which reveals relativity, 'language is itself contextual and words 'mean' only in contexts.'[78] And the interpretive structure carries on in many different ways like 1) the first-person reports, 2) mystic's own interpretation, 3) third-person interpretation in the same tradition, 4) third-person interpretation from other traditions.[79] Proudfoot similarly affirms the interpretive and constructive structure of religious experiences and denies the universal core.[80] And according to him, people initially interpret and then define their experiences as religious and these experiences are culturally mediated.[81]

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73 Steven T. Katz, "Mystical Speech and Mystical Meaning", p. 12.

74 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", pp. 3, 4, 20.

75 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 25.

76 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 46.

77 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 25.

78 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 47.

79 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 23; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 6; Mystical Speech and Mystical Meaning", pp. 4-5.

80 Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience*, London, University of California Press, 1985, pp. 179-180, 183, 187.

81 G. William Barnard, "Explaining the Unexplainable: Wayne Proudfoot's "Religious Experience"", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 60, No: 2, 1992, pp. 234, 241.

Katz alleges that his method is inductive, phenomenological, and open to debate and disconfirmation, and he reached his results by a close reading of the original mystical sources which supply his entire project of re-conceptualizing of mysticism.[82] Katz seeks a proper philosophical and phenomenological explanation for mysticism. He elucidates his aim and how he reached his argumentation:

> Our primary aim has been to mark out a new way of approaching the data, concentration especially on disabusing scholars of the preconceived notion that all mystical experience is the same or similar... our account neither (a) overlooks any evidence, nor (b) has any need to simplify the available evidence to make it fit into comparative or comparable categories, nor (c) does it begin with *a priori* assumptions about the nature of ultimate reality.[83]

Katz adduces evidence from reality as texts, ontology and models which their effects are seen during the mystical educational process.[84] Katz pays attention to what the religious traditions bring to the mystical experiences and he tries to show the conservative phenomenon. Katz initially asks the question of what the texts tell us. Then he compares the differences between the religious traditions by beginning with the example of Christian mystical experience.[85] According to Katz 'the nature of the Christian mystics' pre-mystical consciousness informs the mystical consciousness such that he experiences the mystic reality in terms of Jesus, the Trinity, or a personal God.'[86] The Christian mystics aim and reach the mystical experience of *Unio Mystica* which finds fulfilment in Christ as lover and beloved according to this ontological schema.[87] On the other hand, Jewish mystic's pre-mystical consciousness informs the mystical consciousness that the experience will be in terms of 'the Divine Throne, or the angel Metatron, or aspects of the *Sefiroth*, or the heavenly court and palaces, or the Hidden Torah, or God's secret Names, but not loss of self in unity with God.'[88] Because in Jewish teaching that is learned from Torah God's Being and men's being are ontologically distinct and this duality cannot be overcome.[89] The experience of Jewish mysticism is called *Devekuth* which means 'adhesion to' God as

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82 Steven T. Katz, "Responses and Rejoinders", p. 752.

83 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 65-66.

84 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 51.

85 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 32.

86 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 27.

87 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", pp. 35, 40.

88 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 34.

89 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 33-35.

a loving intimacy which its object is God as Other rather than Self.[90] Jewish mysticism has a special 'mystical theology' known as Kabbalah that includes this information and affects Jewish mystical experience.[91] The same emphasis concerning to duality that cannot be achieved between Allah and human exists in Muslim teaching which is learned from the Quran and Sunnah. This monotheistic emphasis is very important in Islam, too. According to Katz, Muslim mystics comprehend the Quran as the perfect 'Word' of Allah completely the same as Jewish mystics comprehend the Torah as the perfect 'Word' of God. This is the conservative phenomenon.[92] On the other hand, the Muslim (Sufi) mystic's pre-mystical consciousness informs the consciousness that his experience must be related to the Quran, Muhammad and Allah. The consciousness of a Muslim mystic is Quran'ized and Muslim mystics experience their prophet Muhammad in a transcendental form.[93] Also Buddhist mystics' pre-mystical consciousness informs the mystical consciousness that the Buddhist experience of Nirvana must be non-personal, non-everything, 'not this, not that.'[94] From his tradition a Buddhist learns 'four noble truths' which include teaching regarding suffering and 'an eightfold path' which is related to the cessation of suffering to achieve *Nirvana*, the goal of Buddhist mysticism which is the 'no-self' experience of 'empty'.[95] On the other hand, a Hindu mystic's pre-mystical consciousness informs the mystical consciousness that '*Atman* is *Brahman*, i.e. the self is the Self, though this ultimate Self is non-personal.'[96] The Hindu mystic learns what he will experience from Vedic texts which are used as a source of meditation and experiences *Brahman* with the help of *mantra*s.[97]

As stated above, Katz's evidence of text and ontology are passive and theoretical, while his other evidence named model is active and practical as a practitioner of the religious tradition. According to Katz, model (*ideal*) plays many roles[98], conditions the mystical experience, contributes seriously to the creation of experience and he or she is also mediator as guide between

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90 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 35-36.

91 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 33.

92 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 17.

93 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", pp. 16, 18, 26-27.

94 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 27; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 5.

95 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 36-39.

96 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 41.

97 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 37; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", pp. 28-29.

98 For detailed explanation regarding roles of model see Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", pp. 43-46.

texts and mystic candidates during the process of mystical education.[99] Every model teaches his/her own teachings with 'a *specific* way and a *specific* goal'.[100]

Katz compares the Jewish mystical experience of Devekuth which has an understanding of Personal God with the Buddhist mystical experience of Nirvana which is non-personal[101] and the Christian mystical experience of Unio Mystica which has an understanding of Personal God with the Hindu mystical experience of Brahman which is non-personal[102]. Then, he compares Buddhist and Hindu mystical experiences which are both non-personal. As a result of these comparisons and enquiry of ontological schema of the religions, he reaches the fundamental differences between religious traditions notwithstanding superficial similarity in the examples of theistic religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam or monistic religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. According to Katz 'theisms' of the Christian Mystic, Jewish Mystic and Muslim Mystic are wholly different from each other; likewise the monism of Buddhism that denies the existence of a substantial self or soul is different from the monism of Advaitan experience that affirms one universal self as Brahman.[103]

After comparing religious traditions, Katz takes the role of Song of Songs as a paradigm in Christian mysticism which includes encounter with Christ as beloved and Jewish Mysticism which includes Kabbalistic sexual language and imagery to demonstrate the differences in the same, specific example.[104] He concludes his quest with the differences of mystical experiences both in different religious traditions and the same religious tradition.[105] He proposes mystical experience(s) like Christian mystical experience, Jewish mystical experience, Muslim mystical experience, Buddhist mystical experience, and Hindu mystical experience instead of one and the same mystical experience. As is seen every mystic is conditioned from childhood up by images, concepts, beliefs, symbols, rituals, and ideological values pertaining to his own tradition's ontological schema. So these contexts "define, *in advance*, what the experience *he wants to have*, and which then does have, will

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99   Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 53.

100 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 44.

101 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 36, 39.

102 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 26.

103 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 32.

104 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", pp. 6-12.

105 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 27.

be like."[106] Every religious tradition reflects its own teaching to its mystical experience by model and process of education. Therefore Kabbalists, "certainly never encounter Jesus as the Lover of the Song… Christians almost always… experience Jesus as the Christ, rather than 'God the Father'… Muslims… often see Muhammad in his primordiality as Logos, pre-existent perfect man, Prophet, and the like.[107]

Katz rejects Stace's evidence of similar language in conjunction with supporting differences through the criticism of content. According to Katz the use of apparently similar language does not reflect an underlying universal core as Stace claimed. Being non-spatial, non-temporal, sublime, joyful, beyond language and especially ineffable, and paradoxical does not give any information about the content of experience; these traits which are far from comparability can be applied to more than one object and do not guarantee anything about the content. For this reason ascribing two objects with these features (especially ineffability and paradoxicality) does not make them the same. If they are the same, there must be another conceivable reason for this result. This misunderstanding that there is a universal core derives from the surface grammar of the mystical reports.[108] The motto of mysticism as 'I don't mean what I say and I don't say what I mean'[109] gives nothing about the content of experience so it is nonsense and useless. Therefore, Katz concludes that the universal core in addition to the similarity of language and content cannot be defended in this way.

As a consequence of Katz's arguments as to texts, ontologies and models and the expression of mysticism, it is clear that Katz wants to show configurative, formative, constructive and complex pre-experiential elements that affect the actual mystical experiences and equates what is aimed before experience and what is experienced.[110] According to Katz, there is a close causal connection between mystical experience(s) and their historical, social, linguistic, conceptual and especially religious contexts.[111] Before mystical experience models and the elements of education prepare mystical experience, during mystical experience external factors, orthodox concerns and various contexts condition mystical consciousness, and after mystical

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106 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 33.

107 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 16.

108 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 46-47, 54-55.

109 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 40; "Mystical Speech and Mystical Meaning", p. 3.

110 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 34-35, 40.

111 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 29, 40; "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 5.

experience mystics speak of their experience by using religious language and terminology related to their own tradition.[112] Katz's final decision which he mentioned at first is:

> As a consequence it appears certain that mystical experience is not and logically cannot be the grounds for *any* final assertions about the nature or truth of any religious or philosophical position nor, more particularly, for any specific dogmatic or theological belief... Thus, in the final analysis, mystical or more generally religious experience is irrelevant in establishing the truth or falsity of religion in general or any specific religion in particular.[113]

The Comparison and Evaluation of Walter T. Stace and Steven T. Katz

We must accept that Stace's conceptual contribution to mysticism can't be denied and also say that Katz's criticizing Stace's arguments is highly important. The Comparison of Walter T. Stace and Steven T. Katz has a basic matter as "universal core". Stace works in favour of universal core and he supports this concept by a pure and unmediated experience without the effect of religion and culture, whereas Katz works unfavourably to universal core and rejects it by supporting the effect of religion and culture. When we attempt to compare Stace and Katz in terms of the nature of mystical experience, we must first ask: How far are the understandings of Stace's and Katz's extraordinary (religious or mystical) experience similar or different? As is seen in this article, they are quite different: Stace's definition is exactly mystical experience and excludes the religious experience, while Katz's definition seems to contain both mystical and religious experiences. When Stace speaks of 'mystical experience' he means a pure experience that does not include any religious or cultural elements, but When Katz speaks of 'mystical experience', he means different mystical experience(s) being shaped by different religions and cultures.[114] This seems to be the reason for the philosophical criticisms stemming from their different understandings on the same phenomenon.

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112 Fatma Yüce, *Dini ve Mistik Tecrübede Evrensel* Öz, Elis Publications, Ankara, 2016, p. 212.

113 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 23.

114 Swinburne deals with the religious experience more general meaning and mystical experience as the subset of religious experience. We can see that Swinburne's explanation suits Katz's understanding, but does not fit Stace's. For Swinburne's classification that makes the differences between the concept of 'Religious' and 'Mystical' Experience clear see Swinburne, The Existence of God, pp. 250-251. For all possibilities regarding 'Religious' and 'Mystical' experiences see Fatma Yüce, *Dini ve Mistik Tecrübede Evrensel Öz*, pp. 111-129.

It is useful to make a distinction between institutional religiosity which includes intellectual elements with their practical dimension and individual religiosity which is related to emotions and feelings to explain the reason for Stace's and Katz's understandings.[115] Let us deal with their understandings of religion. Katz claims that mystics have existential knowledge of what their co-religionists know only through propositions. According to Katz, mystics see their own teaching as the older teaching in a new guise, a personal confirmation of the existing doctrine and a legitimate extension of the traditional teaching.[116] It appears that Katz emphasizes the close connection between the established religion and mystical experience. It becomes meaningful to interpret Katz's approach with established religion since his understanding wholly fits it. As for Stace, the established religion cannot take place in his system as it damages the pure experience. Therefore, mysticism may be associated with a religion in this sense but it need not be. However, the understanding of individual religion may not be a problem in Stace's approach. According to Stace, when we understand religion as the feelings of the holy, the sacred, or the divine instead of a creed or intellectual structure, mysticism may open to religion.[117] In line with these views pertaining to religion Katz considers the mystics conflicting with established religion like Hallaj, Ortlieb, Priscillian of Avila etc as exceptions.[118] Besides, Stace says that mystics express their monistic experience in terms of dualistic form due to the fear of exclusion and pressure of the theologians and ecclesiastical authorities.[119] As is seen, the understanding of the term 'religion' and 'mystical experience' have a crucial importance to conceive the nature of experience and they are indicative for philosophical analyses.

Consequently, both Stace and Katz have reductionist attitudes different from each other; the former has religious reductionism and the latter has transcendental reductionism about the nature of mystical experience. Actually the possibility of pure consciousness instead of universality and the common characteristics of mystical experience may be supported; besides the existence of contextual experiences does not preclude the possibility of any specific unmediated, pure experience. Thus, the existence of pure consciousness (even it has occurred only once) or the possibility of pure experience itself challenges against Katz's arguments. Effects of contexts cannot

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115 For detailed information about this distinction and its relation with Katz's and Stace's understandings see Fatma Yüce, *Dini ve Mistik Tecrübede Evrensel Öz*, pp. 95-99.

116 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 22.

117 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p.341.

118 Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", p. 3.

119 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 232.

be denied but the extremist and deterministic approaches which claim that every experience must be conditioned by various contexts like religion and culture don't seem to be true. It can be said that the term 'pure consciousness' and the term 'context' are very important to understand the nature of mystical experience and must be explained more comprehensively than current approaches. Stace's explanation as to pure consciousness is of great important but not adequate. The words such as 'emptiness', 'nothingness' and 'contentless, etc. Do not conform to the reality of 'experience of something'. Furthermore, he does not explain the transition from ordinary consciousness to mystical consciousness with its two-directional symmetry. As it is seen in the article, Stace agrees with mystics that the nature of mystical experience is beyond and above reason. Nonetheless, he does not explain this. Hence there must be another concept with other content apart from reason. Actually, Stace's theory of two kinds of consciousness may solve the problems about nature and expression. He only says that the difficulty with language may derive from the differences between two kinds of consciousness then passes; however he tries to solve these problems by using some other arguments.[120] On the other hand, Katz seems to be right to give more credit to the contexts such as religion and culture etc. and to reject Stace's one-directional symmetry which is from 'experience' to 'beliefs' (contexts) and to propose two-directional symmetry between 'experience' and 'beliefs' (contexts).[121] In addition to Katz's contextual structure which we mentioned in the previous chapter, we may add other contexts and classify them as: 1) The context of concept regarding language: Linguistic determination, 2) The context of religious teachings and religious tradition regarding religion: Religious determination, 3) The context of individual factors regarding Psychology: Psychological determination, 4) The context of cultural factors regarding Sociology: Sociological determination.[122]

Both Stace and Katz have philosophical and scientific understandings and propose to approach mystical experience phenomenologically. Stace thinks that psychology and introspection are important as well as philosophy.[123] But he is criticised not having referred to any basic psychological books.[124] Both philosophy and psychology are significant in explaining

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120 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 281.

121 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", p. 30. Parenthetical phrases for extending the matter are mine.

122 Fatma Yüce, *Dini ve Mistik Tecrübede Evrensel Öz*, p. 192.

123 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, pp. 55, 58, 110, 155, 305.

124 J. Maussaieff Masson, T. C. Masson, "The Study Of Mysticism: A Criticism of W. T. Stace", *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 4, 1976, p. 115.

mystical experience on account of their definition as the relation of subject and object. Philosophy deals with the ideal i.e. the side of object (God) and Psychology deals with the real i.e. the side of subject (human). Both Stace and Katz emphasize an inductive way through the facts and mystical texts, not an *a priori* way.[125] Nevertheless, we see throughout this article that they both have *a priori* assumptions opposite to each other.[126] Both Stace's emphasis on pure experience which adduces that his conceptualization limits his arguments and Katz's statement that 'there is NO pure (unmediated) experience' show that they use a deductive way, depend on their arguments firmly, and are not open to alternative understandings which are necessary to understand mystical experience. Katz accuses Stace of being heuristic, preliminary and dependent on his own conceptualization. Initially to say that there are two kinds of mysticisms (introvertive and extrovertive) and then to admit that they both are the same and monistic is problematical. Stace supports that both of the ideas are right at the same time, so according to Katz, this is Stace's main bias.[127] In line with Katz's idea, the claim that Stace uses *a priori* way and it is deductive gets stronger, though Stace predicted this criticism and tried to reply to it. According to Stace, it is good evidence that the two kinds of mystical experience have the same result despite using different methods and are universal in all times, ages and cultures. Stace adds 'if this were not so-if for example, one type occurred only in the East and the other only in the West- this might tend somewhat to undermine our confidence in a universal core, though not wholly so.'[128] As we can see clearly, the claim that Katz uses *a priori* assumption which is the denial of 'pure experience' is clearer than the claim that Stace uses *a priori* assumption which is the affirmation of 'pure experience'. Additionally, they both have the same firm attitude on opposite sides, and deal with the matter in *a priori* way, although they claim that they investigate the mystical experience phenomenologically.

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125 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 46; Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 65-66.

126 For the claim that Katz uses a priori way with a clear a priori assumption see, Robert K. C. Forman, 'Introduction: Mysticism, Constructivism, and Forgetting', *The Problem of Pure Consciousness; Mysticism and Philosophy*, Ed. Jensine Andresen and Robert K. C. Forman, New York, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 15-16; Reza Shah Kazemi, *Paths to Transcendence: According to Shankara, Ibn Arabi, and Meister Eckhart*, Indiana, World Wisdom, Bloomington, 2006, p. 229; Fatma Yüce, *Dini ve Mistik Tecrübede Evrensel Öz*, pp. 250-251. For the claim that Stace uses a priori way with a priori assumption that is possibility of experience of Pure Ego see, Betül Akdemir Süleyman, 'Walter T. Stace'in Mistik Tecrübeye İlişkin Düşüncelerinin Bir Değerlendirmesi', İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi, No: 37, 2017, pp. 140, 142.

127 Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism", pp. 23, 27-30, 67, 68.

128 Walter T. Stace, *Mysticism and Philosophy*, p. 62.

Stace reaches the result of similarity from the facts and mystic reports by proposing experience-interpretation distinction to eliminate the effect of religion and culture; whereas, Katz reaches differences from the same reality by asserting the constructive effect of religion and culture. Moreover Katz insists that Stace is misled by apparently similar language, so he denies the similarity about language contrary to Stace. However their result regarding expression has a striking resemblance pertaining to the trait of ineffability. They both refuse absolute 'ineffability' that James and mystics affirm partially in order to make possible philosophical analyses for mysticism. Katz criticises Stace incorrectly in terms of ineffability. They actually disagree on the characteristic of paradoxicality, yet. Katz does not recognize this important nuance while speaking of apparently similar language. It is of importance to notice that ineffability cannot be maintained because of the wide mystical literature. It appears certain that language is insufficient to transfer the real meaning of religious and mystical experiences from one to another. So there may be other ways to express extraordinary experiences such as analogical or negative language, symbol, metaphor, etc. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, the similarity of language among mystics from different times, ages, places, cultures and religions is clear as well as the similarity of procedures like breathing exercises, meditation and concentration, etc. Procedural and linguistic similarities are clearer than structural similarities. Moreover, structural similarities which are difficult to define due to the complex nature of mystical experience can be found by careful empirical and cognitive investigations, especially brain studies. Even Katz's conservative phenomenon within different traditions can be good evidence for similarities. It is more reasonable to call this element 'similar phenomenon' contrary to Katz which is not known clearly today but might be known in the future due to the astonishingly similar practices and to use this in favour of similarities. As a result of the philosophical and conceptual analysis, comparison and evaluation of the arguments of Stace and Katz, we can say that their approaches have gaps that make them doubtful and incapacitate, though they are right on some aspects. Therefore, the most reasonable solution to deal with the philosophical problems of mysticism must be a combination of Universalist and Contextualist approaches.[129] Furthermore it is revealed that the similarities regarding the nature of mystical experiences

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129 Moderate approaches between Universalism or Essentialism (Stace) and Contextualism (Katz) seem to be more reasonable and explanatory. And they are also useful to fill the present approaches' philosophical gaps. For Moderate Contextualism see Abdüllatif Tüzer, *Dini Tecrübe ve Mistisizm: Felsefi Bir Yaklaşım*, İstanbul, Dergah Publications, 2006, pp. 179-180. For Moderate Universal Essentialism see Fatma Yüce, *Dini ve Mistik Tecrübede Evrensel Öz*, pp. 298-304.

as we may call the unity of content, regarding the process of mystical experience as we may call the unity of method and the similarities regarding the expression of mystical experiences as we may call the unity of language cannot be denied. It is more reasonable to defend structural, methodical and linguistic similarities in the mystical and more generally religious experiences than the differences and to use these similarities in favour of supporting the beliefs as an argument from religious or mystical experience.

Abstract

The Nature, Objectivity and Expression of Mystical Experience:
With a Special Reference to Walter T. Stace and Steven T. Katz

Both Walter T. Stace and Steven T. Katz play an important role as regards the mystical experience with their opposite arguments concerning the 'universal core'. Therefore in this article the nature, objectivity and expression of mystical experience is discussed through their arguments. It is seen that their understanding of mystical experience is quite different; so is their inference for the problem of objectivity. They only have a common consideration as to the issue of expression. Stace defines mystical experience beyond culture and irrelevant to religion, whereas Katz's mystical experience is over-determined by religion and culture. This finding is also used to solve the other philosophical problems throughout the article. Consequently it is deduced that there are structural, procedural and linguistic similarities rather than differences in the mystical experiences.

Key Words: Mystical Experience, Nature, Objectivity, Expression, Walter T. Stace, Steven T. Katz

Öz

Walter T. Stace ve Steven T. Katz'a Özel *Bir Referansla*
Mistik Tecrübenin Mahiyeti, Nesnelliği ve Dışavurumu

Hem Walter T. Stace hem Steven T. Katz evrensel öze dair birbirlerine zıt argümanlarla mistik tecrübe konusunda önemli rol oynarlar. Bu yüzden bu makalede mistik tecrübenin mahiyeti, nesnelliği ve dışavurumu onların argümanlarıyla tartışılmıştır. Onların mistik tecrübe anlayışlarının oldukça farklı olduğu görülmüştür; dolayısıyla nesnellik problemine yönelik çıkarımları da. Onlar sadece dışa vurum konusunda ortak bir düşünceye sahiptirler. Stace mistik tecrübeyi kültürün ötesinde ve dinle ilişkisiz bir şekilde tanımlarken, Katz'ın mistik tecrübesi din ve kültür aracılığıyla aşırı belirlenmiştir. Bu bulgu makale boyunca diğer felsefi problemleri çözmek için kullanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak mistik tecrübede farklılıklardan ziyade yapısal, yöntemsel ve linguistik benzerlikler olduğuna ulaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mistik Tecrübe, Mahiyet, Nesnellik, Dışavurum, Walter T. Stace, Steven T. Katz

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