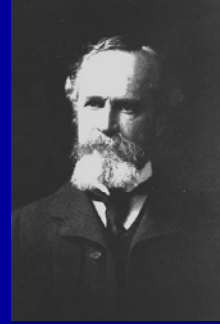


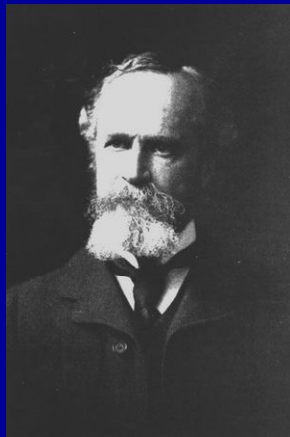


# PHIL 101



## Self, World, & God

### WILLIAM JAMES



- 1842-1910
- M.D Harvard -- 1869
- Instructor Anatomy and Physiology, Harvard – 1873
- Psychology, Harvard – 1875
- Philosophy, Harvard – 1879
- *Principles of Psychology* – 1890
- *The Will to Believe* – 1897
- *Varieties of Religious Experiences* -- 1902

## MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES



- Religious experiences
- Mystical experiences
- James' Criteria
  - Ineffability
  - Noetic quality
  - Transiency
  - Passivity
- Psychological characteristics
- Other religions

## EVIDENTIAL WARRANT?



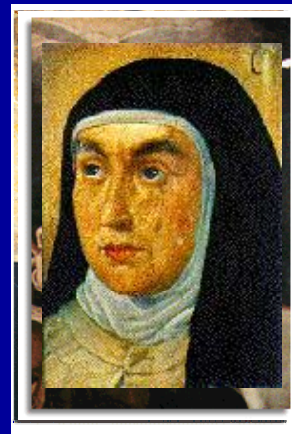
- Mystical states, when well developed, usually are, and have the right to be, absolutely authoritative over the individuals to whom they come
- No authority emanates from them which should make it a duty for those who stand outside of them to accept their revelations uncritically
- They break down the authority of non-mystical or rationalistic consciousness, based on the senses alone.

## Reports from Mystics

- Circumstantial evidence
- Eyewitness testimony?
- St. Teresa of Avila
- Hindu example
- Buddhist example
- William James' characterization
  - Ineffability
  - Noetic quality
  - Transiency
  - Passivity

## St. Teresa of Avila

- Born 1515
- Wild childhood
- Sent to convent
- Joins to sisterhood 1536
- Serious illness 1538
- "Interior voices" 1555-6
- First rapture 1558
- Finishes *Autobiography* 1562
- Dies 1582
- Canonized 1622



## Testimony as Evidence

- E<sub>1</sub>. Statement
- E<sub>2</sub>. Context
- E<sub>3</sub>. Relevant biography

=====

T<sub>0</sub>. St. Teresa made the statement because she believed it.

### RIVAL EXPLANATIONS:

- T<sub>1</sub>. Said it because it's false.
- T<sub>2</sub>. Said it for some other reason

## Testimony as Evidence

- E<sub>1</sub>. Statement
- E<sub>2</sub>. Context
- E<sub>3</sub>. Relevant biography
- E<sub>4</sub>. Made the statement because she believed it.

=====

T<sub>0</sub>. Believes it because it's true.

### RIVAL EXPLANATIONS:

- T<sub>1</sub>. Believes it because . . .
- T<sub>2</sub>. Believes it because . . .

## Rival Explanations

- T<sub>1</sub>. She was possessed.**
- T<sub>2</sub>. She was going crazy.**
- T<sub>3</sub>. She was suffering from a brain tumor.**
- T<sub>4</sub>. She was experiencing some other divine presence.**
- T<sub>5</sub>. Newsweek hypothesis**

## Other Relevant Data

- Lots of similar reports from the Christian tradition.**
- But, lots of similar reports from non-theistic traditions.**
- New rival:**
  - T<sub>6</sub>. Religious pluralists' hypothesis**



## Argument from Mystical Experiences

**E<sub>1</sub>. Many sincere reports from theistic mystics.**

**E<sub>2</sub>. Many sincere reports from non-theistic mystics.**

=====

**T<sub>0</sub>. God exists and directly communicates with mystics.**

# Explaining Mystical Experiences

- **Theistic explanations**
  - Different traditions within theism
  - Problem of non-theistic mystical experiences
  - Religious exclusivism
- **Secular naturalistic explanations**
  - Neurophysiology of mystical experiences
  - Cause of these neurophysiological changes
- **Religious pluralistic explanation**
  - Evidence of religious pluralism?