

James

Mysticism

Mystical Experiences

So you've had a mystical experience.

Mystical Experiences

SO

WHaT!

Three conclusions

- Authoritative for the individual
- Not authoritative for others
- Indicative of other orders of truth and different kinds of consciousness

Mystical states, when well developed, usually are and have the right to be, absolutely authoritative over the individuals to whom they come.

absolute
authority?

No authority emanates from them which should make it a duty for those who stand outside of them to accept their revelations uncritically.

(un)critical

They show rationalistic
consciousness to be only one
kind of consciousness.

They open out the possibility of other orders of truth, in which so far as anything in us vitally responds to them, we may freely continue to have faith.

Authority of
reason

Other orders
of truth

Mystical states wield no
authority (to the non-religious)
simply by being mystical states...

They offer us *hypotheses* which we may ignore, but which as thinkers we cannot possibly upset.

The supernaturalism and optimism to which they would persuade us may be after all the truest of insights into the meaning of life.

Philosophical interpretations:

Permission to believe

Compulsion to believe

What is the role of argument in
religious belief?