



# The Psychoanalytic Mystic

*Michael Eigen*

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Most psychoanalysts tend to be anti-mystical or, at least, non-mystical. Psychoanalysis is allied with science and, if anything, is capable of deconstructing mystical experience. Yet some psychoanalysts tend to be mystical or make use of the mystical experience as an intuitive model for psychoanalysis. Indeed, the greatest split in the psychodynamic movement, between Freud and Jung, partly hinged on the way in which mystical experience was to be understood. Michael Eigen has often advocated and encouraged a return to the spiritual in psychoanalysis-what Freud called the oceanic feeling. Here he expands on his call to celebrate and explore the meaning of mystical experience within psychoanalysis, illustrating his writing with the work of Bion, Milner, and Winnicott. Like Bion, he explicitly relates psychoanalysis to faith. Both patient and analyst are immersed in each other and this immersion restores and enriches, and drains. Each has the chance to use their minds and feelings creatively. Each has to hold faith that something good will come of their work together. Professor Eigen, who received his Ph.D. in Psychology from the Graduate Faculty in 1974, has maintained this passion through a career that includes nineteen books, hundreds of journal papers, and forty years of work in clinical psychology. He is currently Associate Clinical Professor in NYU's Postdoctoral Program in Psychotherapy and Psychoanalysis, and also a training and control analyst at the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis (NPAP) where he has served on the Board of Directors.

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