

DEREIFICATION IN ZEN BUDDHISM

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In this article, the concept of dereification in religion is developed, both theoretically and empirically, by analyzing Zen Buddhism. The central thesis is that Zen Buddhism, by virtue of the Mahayana concept of "emptiness" (*sunyata*), constitutes a dereifying perspective. In addition, using the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, the experience of dereifying perception, which is acquired through Zen meditation, is described as a state of focused *durée*. Furthermore, several of the interactional methods through which Zen practitioners demonstrate their dereifying perspective are analyzed from an ethnomethodological and conversation analytic perspective, and the role of these methods in *koan* training is explained.

Conversion to Zen Buddhism has distinctive features that are not found in most other religions. While some sociologists (Bell 1979; Preston 1988; Wilson 1984) have characterized the process of becoming a Zen Buddhist as "desocialization," I will argue that this process is better characterized as resocialization in which *dereifying* perception is acquired. According to Berger's (1967) social constructionist approach,¹ religions tend to legitimate alienated and reifying views of the social world. That is, the belief systems of religious institutions obscure the human production of social objects, such as a moral code or a familial role, by depicting them as the manifestation of some natural or divine order and, therefore, as beyond human influence. However, Berger mentions that a few religions legitimate a *dealienated* and *dereifying* view of their social world. Unfortunately, his mention of dereifying religions is a passing one. Of them Berger states, "While these different possibilities are of great interest for a general sociology of religion, we cannot pursue them further here" (1967, p. 98). Nowhere else does he pursue this idea. My aim is to develop this conception of dereification in religion, both theoretically and empirically, by analyzing Zen Buddhism and, at the same time, to explain some of the more enigmatic aspects of Zen Buddhism, such as the notion of "emptiness" (*sunyata*), the meditative state of "no-mind" (*mushin*), and the practice of *koan* training.

First, I review the sociological literature on desocialization, reification, and dereification. Then, I present my central thesis, that Zen Buddhism, by virtue of the Mahayana concept of "emptiness" (*sunyata*), constitutes a dereifying perspective of the social world. Next, I provide a description of the experience of dereifying perception in Zen Buddhism, beginning with a description of Zen meditation, followed by a phenomenological analysis that draws on the work of Alfred Schutz. Finally, using ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, I analyze some methods through which Zen practitioners demonstrate their dereifying perspective to

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each other in face-to-face interaction, and I explain the role of these methods in the Zen practice of *koan* training.

BACKGROUND

Several sociologists have observed that conversion to Buddhism and other Eastern spiritual traditions is radically different from that of other religions and that it should not be conceptualized as "resocialization." These scholars (Bell 1979, pp. 56-57; Preston 1988, pp. 64, 70; Wilson 1984, pp. 302-303)² argue that earlier sociological accounts (Balch 1980; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Straus 1979) that conceive of religious conversion as a resocialization process (just like that involved in joining *any* type of new group in which a new belief system is learned) are inadequate for explaining conversion to Buddhism or Yoga. In these traditions, one's intellect, the faculty by which one perceives the world *through* language, beliefs, and culture, is viewed as a cause of ignorance and delusion that in turn causes alienation and suffering. One of the central goals of these traditions is to "liberate" individuals from the oppressive effects of their own intellect and culture. Hence, according to these sociologists conversion to Buddhism and Yoga consists of *desocialization*, the unlearning or elimination of habitual and problematic ways of feeling, acting, perceiving, and thinking, acquired through childhood socialization, which are mediated through language and culture (Bell 1979, p. 55; Preston 1988, p. 73; Wilson 1984, p. 303).

Desocialization has serious problems as a sociological concept. First, the concept as defined by the authors (Bell 1979; Preston 1988; Wilson 1984) is too vague in that it does not specify *which* socialized habits are eliminated. While the authors give some examples of habits that are "unlearned"—such as the tendency "to fear or worship or lust after power" (Bell 1979, p. 56), the inability to concentrate (Preston 1988, pp. 72-73), or the tendency to experience guilt or stress (Wilson 1984, p. 303)—they offer no criteria for determining which socialized habits are "problematic" and therefore eliminated. Second, the term "desocialization" is misleading because it implies a reversal of *all* socialization, in which case the individual would lose the ability to participate in society. For example, Erving Goffman defines "desocialization" as a "loss of fundamental capacities to communicate and co-operate" (Goffman 1961, p. 13n.). Although Inge Bell (1979), David Preston (1988), and Stephen Wilson (1984) define "desocialization" as an empowering process rather than as a debilitating one, earlier studies of Buddhism³ *have* defined it negatively; therefore, the use of the term may lead sociologists to mistake this perspective for another to which it is diametrically opposed. Third, the most serious flaw with desocialization is the idea of "unlearning." Unlearning implies that, in conversion to Zen Buddhism, old habits are eliminated *without* being replaced by new habits. In fact, new habits, such as meditating, *are* learned, and a sociological account of conversion to Zen Buddhism must acknowledge and analyze them. Although the idea of "unlearning" accords with the language of Buddhists themselves, it is problematic as a sociological concept and instead should be recognized as a member's concept.

With their desocialization perspective, Bell, Preston, and Wilson appear to be attempting to capture how resocialization into a Zen group is distinctly different from resocialization into most other types of groups: rather than consisting of the substitution of one belief system or theory for another, it is characterized by a change at the *metatheoretical* level. What is learned by the initiate is not simply a new belief system but a new way of perceiving *all* belief systems. In my view, rather than describing this change as *desocialization*, which implies that

everything gained through childhood socialization is lost and that nothing new is learned, this process is better characterized as resocialization in which *dereifying* perception is acquired.

While the concept of “reification” in religion first appears in the works of Ludwig Feuerbach, G. W. F. Hegel, and Karl Marx, I will use Berger and his colleagues’ *social constructionist* account of reification and dereification as a springboard for this study. According to Berger and Luckmann (1966), any social world is inherently precarious because it is produced and maintained solely through human activity. If the members of a society were to stop acting, not only would social institutions stop functioning, but the social world as such would cease to exist. Although social reality is dependent on its members’ ongoing activities, it does not necessarily appear as such to the members themselves. For them, the social world is just *there*, apparently existing independently of any person’s constitutive knowledge or activity. Berger and Luckmann (1966), drawing on Marx ([1867-1895] 1967), call this apprehension of the social world as an independently existing world “reification.” According to Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 89), “reification is the apprehension of the products of human activity *as if* they were something else than human products—such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will.” Members of society may reify or attribute an independent ontology to language, ideas, roles, norms, institutions, and even self-identities. By denying the status of these objects as human products, reification helps stabilize the inherently precarious social world.

Reification is different from objectification, the process by which the mind lifts one aspect of reality out of the overall flow of experience and makes it a discrete object of consciousness (Berger and Pullberg 1965, p. 200). Reification, on the other hand, is the process of objectifying reality and then, apprehending the object as an alien thing that is independent of its producer. Furthermore, Berger and Pullberg (1965, p. 200) conceptualize reification in terms of “alienation”:

By *alienation* we mean the process by which the unity of the producing and the product is broken. The product now appears to the producer as an alien facticity and power standing in itself and over against him, no longer recognizable as product. In other words, alienation is the process by which man forgets that the world he lives in has been produced by himself. . . . Reification is objectification in an alienated mode.

Thus, reification is the objectification of reality by an alienated consciousness.

According to Berger and his colleagues, although objectification is “anthropologically necessary” for a society to exist, reification is not. Therefore, *dereification* is a theoretical possibility (Berger and Pullberg 1965, p. 209). Although people have historically tended to perceive the social world in a reifying manner, it is always possible for them to recognize the objects of the social world as constructions produced solely through human activity. Furthermore, in times of radical social change, culture shock, or social marginality, particular social objects tend to be dereified by the people involved (Berger and Pullberg 1965, p. 209). For example, during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, proponents of the women’s rights movement drew attention to the fact that the definition of the woman’s role in society is a social construction, not a fact of nature or a manifestation of divine will, and, therefore, it is alterable. But even in times of social change, when particular social objects are dereified, they tend to be replaced with new reified objects, and hence, people’s overall perception of the social world tends to be reifying.

In *The Sacred Canopy*, Berger (1967) applies his social constructionist theory to religion. He asserts that religious institutions have functioned historically to stabilize the social order of a society by legitimating alienated and reified views of the social order (Berger 1967, p. 89). That is, the mainstream religious institutions of a society provide an explanation for why the world and the particular social order do and *should* exist, which identifies divine will as their cause. Thus, the active role that people play in producing their world is denied.

Berger (1967) also points to exceptions to this historical trend: religions that legitimate a dealienated and, therefore, dereifying view of the social world.⁴ These religions are found especially among Western and Eastern forms of mysticism.⁵ In general, they identify "ultimate reality" as beyond the empirical world, and thus they relativize the social order and its norms by asserting that the empirical world is a conventionally sustained illusion. For example, Berger states that the "more sophisticated soteriologies of India" assert that the empirical world, including the social order, is an illusion (*maya*) constructed by the mind using language and commonsense knowledge (Berger 1967, p. 97; Bell 1979, p. 55; Watts 1957, pp. 40-42). This notion of the empirical world as illusion was inherited by Buddhism (Hajime 1987, p. 223) and is part of the conceptual basis of dereification in Zen Buddhism. Furthermore, these dereifying religions present an interesting case because their goal is to produce *overall* dereifying perception in their members. That is, particular dereified objects are not replaced with different reified objects; *all* social objects are dereified.

Douglas Maynard and Thomas Wilson (1980) offer an ethnomethodological conception of reification that will be useful in analyzing dereification in Zen Buddhism. Their definition of reification is based on the concept of "reflexive determination," a kind of determination that is neither causal nor logical, but contextual: a thing is what it is only in the context of the other parts of the whole. Remove a thing from its context, and it ceases to be what it is. Maynard and Wilson illustrate the concept of reflexive determination by using perceptual pattern recognition as a metaphor. In the case of the face/goblet illusion, one part is a "nose" only in the context of other parts that form a "chin," a "mouth," and an "eye." Remove the curve that constitutes the nose from the whole context, and it ceases to be a "nose." In applying this perceptual metaphor to the social world, Maynard and Wilson (1980, p. 293) say that "the whole context" includes not merely the picture but also the perceiver and the actions the perceiver performs in relation to the picture: "The crux of this move is to recognize that the perceiver and his or her actions are reflexively codetermined with the features of the perceived object in exactly the same way as the nose and chin were in the metaphorical example."

Maynard and Wilson then define abstraction and reification in terms of reflexive determination. Abstraction consists of removing an object or relation between objects from its reflexive context on the basis of some characteristic and treating it as identical with other objects of a category (1980, p. 294). Abstraction is roughly equivalent to Berger and his colleagues' notion of objectification. On the other hand, Maynard and Wilson (1980, p. 294) define reification as the *denial* of the reflexive embeddedness of an object in its context:

However, abstraction is not reification, for while abstraction neglects the reflexive embeddedness of objects or relations, it does not deny that embeddedness in principle. But when reality comes to take on the appearance of consisting of abstracted objects and abstracted relations between them, their reflexive embeddedness is denied effective factual status, and it is proper to speak of *reification*.

Hence, while abstraction entails neglecting the reflexive relations of an object to its context, reification entails the denial of those reflexive relations.

Maynard and Wilson's conception of reification has a broader application than that of Berger and his colleagues. For the latter (1965; 1966; 1967), only the social world can be reified, not the world of nature. However, Maynard and Wilson's (1980) conception of reflexive determination applies to all aspects of the phenomenal world, including "nature." Although natural objects themselves are not made by human activity, their phenomenal status still requires the use of human language and commonsense knowledge. When we walk into a "forest," we often utilize our knowledge of "forests" and see particular aspects of our immediate experience as "trees," "rocks," "streams," and "mountains." Under Maynard and Wilson's conception of reification, the concept "tree" can be reified in the same way that a social product (commodity, relationship, role, etc.) is reified: by denying the reflexive connections of the object named to its context, including the perceiver's own constitutive practices. Henceforth, when I use the term "social world," I will be referring not merely to the world of social institutions and relations but to all aspects of the world *as it is experienced through the categories of commonsense knowledge*. This refinement is necessary because, according to Zen Buddhism, people reify not only social institutions but all kinds of objects of their phenomenal experience that they define using commonsense categories.

Burke Thomason (1982) offers a Schutzian definition of dereification⁶ that explicates, more clearly than that of Berger and his colleagues, how dereification occurs phenomenologically and that accords more closely with Maynard and Wilson's conception of reification. Thomason (1982, p. 90) writes:

Our "... objectivities ... [are] always capable ... of being 'unfrozen' and brought back to their original active state" [Schutz 1932, p. 77]. Schutz is saying in effect that we *can* dereify our experiences, i.e. recall the subjective constituting processes out of which they originally arose.

Any *thing* that is perceived as existing independently of the perceiver can be dereified by recalling the subjective experiences out of which the object was constituted and by apprehending the reflexive connections of the object to its context.

Finally, a truly dereifying perspective is "radically reflexive" (Pollner 1991), in other words, one that, while it asserts that all social objects are constructed through human activity, also recognizes that its *own* assertions possess this same characteristic and, therefore, are vulnerable to reification. For example, Melvin Pollner (1991, p. 370) describes "radical reflexivity" in early ethnomethodology as the appreciation of the accomplished character of *all* social activity, including ethnomethodological work. In other words, while they were analyzing the detailed practices in and through which people accomplish the accountable features of social settings, the early ethnomethodologists also analyzed the detailed practices in and through which they themselves accomplished the accountable features of their ethnomethodological analyses. In a similar way, dereifying perspectives in religion⁷ recognize that their own doctrines, even the doctrine that the empirical world is a conventionally sustained illusion, are conventionally sustained illusions. Such recognition causes doctrines and theories to lose any "absolute" authority they may appear to possess when taken for granted and reified. The result of this radical reflexivity in dereifying religions is the total abandonment of representation as a means of realizing "ultimate truth."

Thus, instead of characterizing conversion to Zen Buddhism as “desocialization,” this conversion process is better characterized as resocialization in which the initiate learns to perceive the social world in a dereifying manner. I will develop this concept of dereification in religion, both theoretically and empirically, and at the same time explain some of the more enigmatic aspects of Zen Buddhism.

THE MAHAYANA CONCEPT OF “EMPTINESS”

Zen Buddhism is a Sino-Japanese form of Mahayana Buddhism, and it is with the Mahayana conception of “emptiness” (*sunyata*) that we can begin to understand dereification in Zen Buddhism. Buddhism originated in India around the sixth century before the common era,⁸ as a reaction against the religious and social order of the Brahman establishment (Gómez 1987, p. 52). The primary goal of Buddhism is liberation from the cycle of birth-and-rebirth (*samsara*). According to the Buddhist theory of *samsara*, sentient beings are continually reborn into several realms after they die. The law of *karma* asserts that when one performs virtuous actions, one is reborn into the higher, more pleasant realms, and, conversely, when one performs nonvirtuous actions, one is reborn into the lower, more unpleasant realms. Sakyamuni (563-483 B.C.E.), the historical *Buddha* (“one who has awakened”), taught that the individual can attain liberation (*nirvana*) from the cycle of birth-and-rebirth by eliminating all attachments to the things of this world. All attachments are eliminated when one directly realizes the fact of “no-self” (*anatman*)—in other words, that the self is an “illusion” (*maya*) and, therefore, that there is no real basis for evaluating things as desirable or undesirable. The Mahayana (“greater vehicle”) school of Buddhism, which emerged in India by the first century B.C.E., extended the notion of no-self to *all* phenomena with the conception of “emptiness” (*sunyata*):⁹ not only is the self an illusion, so is *every* discrete phenomenon, and therefore, there are no real objects to become attached to in the first place and there is no real self to do the grasping. Thus, while the ordinary consciousness of the normally socialized individual is in a state of “ignorance” (*avidya*) of the truth of emptiness, “enlightenment” consists of the realization of emptiness.

Nagarjuna (150-250 C.E.) systematized the *concept* of “emptiness” (*sunyata*), which first appeared in the Prajnaparamita Sutras (100 B.C.E.-200 C.E.), and founded the first philosophical school of Mahayana Buddhism (*Madhyamika*). Rather than establishing a fixed dogma of his own, Nagarjuna refuted *all* dogmatic views by showing how their initial propositions lead to unwarranted conclusions (Hajime 1987, p. 230). In other words, Nagarjuna’s *sunyata* philosophy unfreezes all fixed and frozen (i.e., reified) concepts and extreme dichotomies¹⁰ and is a “radically reflexive” perspective that, like ethnomethodology, “unsettles” any version of reality, making visible the work of settling (Pollner 1991, p. 376).

One of several ways Nagarjuna explains emptiness is by identifying it with “dependent co-arising” (*pratitya-samutpada*): “Since things arise dependently . . . they are without essence of their own; as they are without essence, they are void (i.e., devoid of the thing itself), and hence empty of ‘own-being’ ” (Hajime 1987, p. 230). Nagarjuna’s interpretation of dependent co-arising is very similar to Maynard and Wilson’s (1980) “reflexive determination.” According to the concept of reflexive determination, a thing is what it is only in the context of the other parts of the whole context in which it appears (Maynard and Wilson 1980, p. 293). T. R. V. Murti (1955, pp. 137-138) explains Nagarjuna’s interpretation of dependent co-arising in a very similar way: “Any fact of experience is not a thing in itself; it is what it is in relation to other entities, and these in turn depend on others. . . . There is no whole apart from the parts

and vice versa. Things that derive their being and nature by mutual dependence are nothing in themselves; they are not real." Understanding emptiness involves an appreciation of the mutual dependence of or reflexive connections between any phenomenon and its context and the ability to perceive "true reality" or "suchness" (*tathata*), in other words, reality just as it is without the duality imposed by conceptual categories (Hajime 1987, p. 223).

Being "radically reflexive" (Pollner 1991), the *sunyata* doctrine recognizes itself, as well as every other Buddhist doctrine, as a relative construction and, therefore, as incapable of capturing "ultimate truth," or emptiness (Gómez 1987, pp. 79-80). Instead, emptiness can only be "directly realized" or experienced, and this experience comes with the practice of Buddhist meditation. For example, Zen Buddhists consider "sitting meditation" (*zazen*) the only necessary practice for directly realizing "ultimate truth"; *sunyata* philosophy is only considered valuable to the extent that it is useful as a complement to a student's meditation practice (Kapleau 1965, p. 30). By studying *sunyata* philosophy students may learn to abandon their dogmatic reified views of the world that prevent the perception of the world as a constantly changing whole. Mumon (1183-1260) states that when one *directly realizes* emptiness, "you will be able to slay the Buddha should you meet him and dispatch all patriarchs [Zen masters] you encounter" (Kapleau 1965, p. 76), in other words, to dereify all Buddhist doctrines, including *sunyata* philosophy itself (Kapleau 1965, pp. 85-86).

In this way, Buddhist theory can be translated into sociological terms. According to Mahayana Buddhism, the consciousness of the normally socialized individual is an alienated consciousness (Bell 1979, p. 59) in which the individual projects linguistic distinctions and commonsense categories onto reality (Watts 1957, pp. 40-42) and then reifies them. Becoming enlightened involves, at least in part, dereifying perception of all phenomena. Furthermore, the enlightened individual still uses abstractions (or objectifications) in everyday life but does so without reifying them. Nakamura Hajime (1987, p. 223), a scholar of Buddhism, summarizes the concept of emptiness:

The ultimate truth of existence is comprehended by the term "emptiness" (*sunyata*), one of the subtlest and most sophisticated concepts in the philosophical armory of Mahayana Buddhism. Understanding *sunyata* entails the awareness that all things rely for their existence on causal factors and as such are devoid of any permanent "own-being" (*svabhava*). The purely relative existence of all *dharma*s [phenomena] taught by this doctrine entails the realization that the things of this world, the self (*atman*) included, are merely the reifications of conceptual and linguistic distinctions formed under the productive influence of fundamental ignorance (*avidya*). Insofar as things of this world derive their reality solely from a nexus of causal conditions (*pratitya-samutpada*), their nature, what they all share, is precisely a "lack" of self-nature.

In the following sections, a phenomenological description of the experience of Zen meditation will be offered in an attempt to describe emptiness and thus dereifying perception as it is experienced in Zen Buddhism.

The Phenomenology of Zen Meditation

The central practice of Zen Buddhism is "sitting meditation" (*zazen*). According to Yasutani-roshi, all Buddhist doctrine, scriptures, and philosophy are no more than intellectual formalizations of *zazen*; or rather, *zazen* is their practical demonstration (Kapleau 1965, p.

30). Sitting meditation involves maintaining a particular bodily and mental posture. The preferred bodily posture is the full-lotus in which the meditator places the right foot over the left thigh and the left foot over the right thigh and maintains an erect spine. In *zazen* the hands are placed in the lap in a specific position: the right hand is placed in the lap palm-upward, the left hand is placed in the palm of the right hand, also palm-upward, and the tips of the thumbs lightly touch forming an oval. Finally, the eyes are kept half-open and directed downward, but unfocused.

The mental posture involved in sitting meditation is that of concentration. One's attention may be focused on an object, such as one's breathing or on a *koan*, or it may be concentrated without focusing on an object, as in "just sitting" (*shikan-taza*). One of the more intriguing forms of sitting meditation is meditation on a *koan*. A *koan* is a kind of riddle, for example,

What was the appearance of your face before your ancestors were born?
 What is the sound of one hand clapping?
 A monk in all seriousness asked Joshu, "Has a dog Buddha-nature or not?"
 Joshu retorted, "Mu!"

Koans serve both as meditation objects for the student and as testing devices with which the teacher evaluates the student's progress in Zen training. The latter function will be discussed in a subsequent section. In the following quotation, Yasutani-roshi instructs a student on how to meditate on the *koan* "Mu!" (quoted in Kapleau 1965, p. 142):

First repeat the word "Mu," not audibly but in your mind. Concentrate on becoming one with it. Do not think of its meaning. I repeat: just concentrate wholeheartedly on becoming one with Mu. At first your efforts will be mechanical, but this is unavoidable. Gradually, however, all of you will become involved.

Through sitting meditation, the Zen Buddhist develops "one-pointed concentration" (*samadhi*) or "no-mind" (*mushin*). While such mental abilities can greatly enhance one's ability to perform all kinds of activities (Suzuki 1959, p. 114) (e.g., the Japanese samurai practiced Zen meditation to improve their sword-fighting), the main purpose of practicing Zen meditation for the Buddhist is to attain *satori*-awakening or enlightenment. Literally, *satori* means "seeing into your true nature" and at the same time seeing into the true nature of the universe. According to Yasutani-roshi (Kapleau 1965, pp. 143-144), *satori* is attained when the meditator's "I-concept" is completely dispelled from consciousness, and he or she experiences the universe and his or her self as a nondualistic whole. *Satori* is the direct or experiential grasping of *sunyata* (Yasutani-roshi in Kapleau 1965, p. 79).

The social phenomenology of Alfred Schutz can be used to define Zen meditation sociologically as a reality with distinctive characteristics. In his essay, "On Multiple Realities" (1962), Schutz states that we experience many realities including the worlds of daily life, dreams, daydreams, imageries and phantasms, art, religious experience, scientific contemplation, child's play, and even psychotic episodes. Each of these constitutes a distinctive "finite province of meaning" or a set of experiences that share a specific cognitive style and are internally coherent and consistent with others in the set (Schutz 1962, p. 230). Although Schutz mentions religious meditation as an example of a finite province of meaning, he does not describe

it. This was mere economy or oversight, for using Schutz's phenomenology it is possible to describe and analyze the reality of meditation in Zen Buddhism. To this end, it will be useful to review several basic concepts: conduct and action, experience and meaning, performing and working, the natural attitude, and the problem of enclaves.

"Conduct," in Schutz's phenomenology, is meaningful behavior that involves no forethought. "Action," on the other hand, is meaningful behavior that is guided by a plan or project conceived prior to performance. Schutz says that when the plan appears in consciousness, it appears in the future perfect tense, that is, it appears as an already completed action.¹¹

Another pair of Schutzian concepts is "experience" and "meaning." Experience consists of two kinds of phenomena: "lived experience" (Husserl's *Erlebnis*) or "pure duration" (Bergson's *durée*) on the one hand, and reflective thought on the other. *Durée* is a prereflective state in which the world is in flux and there are no discrete objects. Schutz (1932, p. 45) writes:

In "pure duration" there is no "side-by-sideness," no mutual externality of parts, and no divisibility, but only a continuous flux, a stream of conscious states. However, the term "conscious states" is misleading, as it reminds one of the phenomena of the spatial world with its fixed entities, such as images, percepts, and physical objects. What we, in fact, experience in duration is not a being that is discrete and well-defined but a constant transition from a now-thus to a new now-thus. The stream of consciousness by its very nature has not yet been caught up in the net of reflection.

According to Schutz, only by stopping and reflecting on the stream of *durée* can the ego lift a particular experience out of that flow and discriminate it from the rest of experience (Schutz 1932, p. 45). Reflection (or objectification in the terms of Berger et al.) is a necessary condition for the constitution of *meaningful* experience. Schutz (1932, p. 52) explains:

Because the concept of meaningful experience always presupposes that the experience of which meaning is predicated is a discrete one, it now becomes quite clear that only a past experience can be called meaningful, that is, one that is present to the retrospective glance as already finished and done with.

Thus, all subjective meaning, including the spatio-temporal world, is constituted in retrospect through reflection, rather than in the present moment of lived experience (*Erlebnis* or *durée*). Both conduct and action are meaningful in that they can be grasped by the retrospective reflective glance as connected with the rest of one's experiences. Conduct-in-progress becomes meaningful to the individual when the *durée* is suspended. Action has the further feature of being grasped or at least adumbrated before the act is performed; but action too involves a *durée* that *becomes* meaningful upon completion of the act.

Schutz's description of experience coincides with that of Zen Buddhism. For both, there are two fundamental types of experience—nonreflective and reflective. In Zen, nonreflective experience, which is referred to as "suchness" (*tathata*) or as "direct" or "living" experience, is considered the experience of reality as it truly is, while reflective experience is considered an experience of illusions (*maya*) constructed by one's intellect using language and common-sense knowledge. D. T. Suzuki (1949, p. 299) illustrates the importance of this distinction between nonreflective, living experience and reflective experience:

In fact, the truth of Zen is the truth of life, and life means to live, to move, to act, not merely to reflect. Is it not the most natural thing in the world for Zen, therefore, that its development should be towards acting or rather living its truth instead of demonstrating or illustrating it in words; that is to say, with ideas?

Because, as Schutz also points out, all meaning is attached to nonreflective experience retrospectively, all meaning is relative. The "ultimate truth" that Zen practitioners seek, therefore, is not intellectual but experiential or direct. Hence, the intellectual rendering of this "ultimate truth," "emptiness" (*sunyata*), is negative, specifying only that it is devoid of perceptual discriminations and intellectual distinctions.

Just as "ultimate truth" is referred to negatively as emptiness, the mental state that leads to the apprehension of ultimate truth is referred to negatively as "no-mind" (*mushin*). No-mind is a form of *durée*. In both *durée* and no-mind, one lives in the present moment or, rather, does not stop to reflect on the past (recollection) or on the future (anticipation) (Schutz 1932, pp. 49, 57; Suzuki 1959, p. 117). Both *durée* and no-mind are described as a "flowing stream" that is not interrupted by reflection (Schutz 1932, p. 45; Suzuki 1959, p. 111). In addition, the nonreflective state of *durée* and no-mind are characterized by the complete absence of self-consciousness (Schutz 1962, p. 216; Suzuki 1959, p. 147), a phenomenon that Buddhists take as evidence of the illusory nature of the self (*anatman*).

However, in addition to being a state of *durée*, no-mind consists of a second element: concentration (*samadhi*) (Suzuki 1959, p. 183); therefore, not all states of *durée* are equivalent to the meditative state of no-mind. For instance, when the nonreflective mind jumps from present activity to daydreams to bodily sensations, it is in various states of *durée*, but not concentration. When the nonreflective mind exclusively focuses on the present activity, there exists a state of concentration and, therefore, the meditative state of no-mind. For Schutz, there are two types of *durée* that constitute concentration: performing and working. Both performing and working are forms of action in which the self "lives within its acts and its attention is *exclusively* directed to carrying its project into effect, executing its plan" (Schutz 1962, p. 213, emphasis added). In other words, when performing or working, the self "lives within its acts" and is, therefore, in a state of *durée*. Furthermore, the actor is not distracted from the task of accomplishing the present activity. The difference between performing and working is that the former is mental action, such as solving an abstract problem, while the latter is physical action which gears into the outer world and brings about the projected state of affairs by bodily movements (Schutz 1962, pp. 211-212).

Because no-mind is a working state, it is related to what Schutz calls the "natural attitude." The natural attitude is the mental attitude that dominates the world of daily life, to which we invariably return from the experience of other realities. First, the prevalent form of spontaneity of the natural attitude is working (Schutz 1962, p. 212). Second, the natural attitude is characterized by "wide-awakeness," in other words, a state in which the self is fully interested in life. Schutz says that only the performing, and especially the working, self is fully interested in life and thus most wide-awake (Schutz 1962, p. 213).¹² Finally, the natural attitude is characterized by a specific form of experiencing one's *self*. In the natural attitude, one experiences one's self as a working self, "an undivided total self" (Schutz 1962, p. 216). Schutz says that the "working self" is equivalent to James's and Mead's "I," which "gets into experience only after it has carried out the act and thus appears experientially as a part of the Me, that is, the Me appears in our experience in memory" (Schutz 1962, p. 216). Thus, the self

that is perceived by the individual is a construction of the reflective mind and not an element of *durée* or of living experience.

Because no-mind is a working state and working is characteristic of the natural attitude of daily life, no-mind is also an integral part of daily life. But there is one important way in which no-mind differs from the natural attitude as it is experienced by most people. This difference can be seen in what Schutz refers to as the “problem of enclaves.” Although nonreflective working is “prevalent” within the natural attitude, Schutz recognizes that daily life is by no means purely nonreflective. He admits that a region belonging to one province of meaning may be enclosed by another:

If we “sit down” in a major crisis of our life and consider again and again our problems, if we draft, reject, redraft projects and plans before making up our mind, if as fathers we meditate upon pedagogical questions or as politicians upon public opinion—in all these situations we indulge in theoretical contemplation in the wider sense of this term. But all this contemplative thinking is performed for practical purposes and ends, and for this very reason it constitutes an “enclave” of theoretical contemplation within the world of working rather than a finite province of meaning. (Schutz 1962, p. 245)

Theoretical enclaves occurring in the midst of working activities are distinguished from theoretical contemplation proper that does not serve any immediate practical purpose, such as scientific or philosophical theorizing, and that therefore constitute “finite provinces of meaning” (Schutz 1962, p. 245).

While enclaves pose an analytic problem for Schutz, they pose a practical problem for Zen practitioners. Enclaves are distractions that interrupt the continuous flowing of no-mind. Thus, the difference between the meditative state of no-mind and the natural attitude of daily life as it is experienced by most people is that in the former one’s consciousness is empty of all distraction, including unnecessary enclaves of reflection, such as self-consciousness or daydreaming, while in the latter one’s consciousness may be cluttered with unnecessary enclaves. Therefore, the meditative state of no-mind constitutes a *pure* form of the natural attitude, in other words, one that is free of enclaves of reflective thought. This finding is supported by the Zen assertion that the mental state involved in meditation, no-mind, and the fruit of meditation, *satori*-awakening, are the same as “the everyday mind” (*heijo-shin*) (Suzuki 1959, p. 147; 1949, p. 264). If the meditative state of no-mind in Zen Buddhism involves a *pure* natural attitude, this tells us something of what the mystical experience (*satori*) is like in Zen Buddhism and perhaps other religions. *Satori* is not entirely foreign to anyone; it is not qualitatively different from everyday experience, only quantitatively different in that it is more unified because it contains fewer distractions.

The usefulness of Schutz’s phenomenology is in enabling us to define Zen meditation sociologically, as a finite province of meaning with distinctive characteristics. The various forms of “sitting meditation” (*zazen*) in Zen Buddhism are comprised of uninterrupted performing and working.¹³ *Zazen* is performing in that it requires mental action, in other words, concentrating on one’s breathing, holding a mental object such as a *koan*, or maintaining alertness. But sitting meditation is also working in that it requires the bodily action of maintaining a precise bodily posture. Finally, when a competent meditator successfully practices sitting meditation, the meditator’s consciousness is empty of all enclaves of reflection. The meditator experiences focused *durée* and, therefore, has no awareness of the passage of time, of

discrete mental or physical objects (except for the meditation object if it is used), or of any self that is separate from the rest of the world. By meditating, the practitioner experiences a mode of reality that is empty of all social constructions and that thus helps dereify any of his or her fixed conceptions of reality.

DEMONSTRATION OF THE DEREIFYING PERSPECTIVE

Zen practitioners demonstrate their understanding of “emptiness” (*sunyata*), and thus their dereifying perspective, to each other in face-to-face interaction by using particular methods. These methods can be found in the Zen literature, which abounds with the “recorded sayings” (*yü-lu*), the actual utterances and actions, of Zen masters throughout the centuries.¹⁴ Most of these records consist of “questions-and-answers” (*mondos*) between Zen masters and their students. It is these recorded sayings, rather than Mahayana scriptures (*sutras*) or commentaries (*sastras*), “that later followers of the school have looked to when they sought to understand and recapture the living spirit of Ch’an [Zen]” (Watson 1993, p. ix). Furthermore, the interactional methods for demonstrating one’s dereifying perspective play an important role in the Zen practice of *koan* training today.

The Practical Methods of Zen Instruction

Suzuki (1949, pp. 267-313) analyzed many recorded *mondos* and identified several “practical methods of Zen instruction” that the masters use to demonstrate their understanding of emptiness and to help their students develop such an understanding. Suzuki divides these “practical methods” into two general categories: *verbal* methods and *direct* methods. Verbal methods include paradox, going beyond opposites, contradiction, affirmation, repetition, exclamation, silence, and counterquestioning. Direct methods consist of bodily actions such as gesture, striking, performance of a definite set of acts, and directing others to move about. Suzuki does not claim to have identified *all* of the “practical methods” that Zen masters have used or could use; he simply identifies several methods that are common in the Zen literature.

Of Suzuki’s “practical methods,” affirmations, exclamations, gestures, and striking are similar in that they are all responses to questions that, from the perspective of commonsense reasoning, do not appear to constitute “answers.” For example, affirmations, according to Suzuki, are positive statements, in contrast to contradictions or negations, produced in response to a question, but which are not relevant to the meaning-content of the question. Suzuki (1949, pp. 283-284) gives the following examples in which the second speaker responds with an affirmation:

- (1) Monk: I read in the Sutra that all things return to the One, but where does this One return to?
Joshu: When I was in the province of Tsing I had a robe made which weighed seven *chin*.
- (2) (Master Baso Doichi was sick)
Disciple: How do you feel today?
Baso: Sun-faced Buddha, moon-faced Buddha!
- (3) Monk: When the body crumbles all to pieces and returns to the dust, there eternally abides one thing. Of this I have been told, but where does this one thing abide?
Joshu: It is windy again this morning.

Another verbal method, exclamation, entails producing an exclamatory utterance that may be a word, nonsense word, or shout in response to a question, rather than giving an intelligible answer. The Chinese Zen master Lin-chi (Rinzai) (d. 866 C.E.) was famous for responding to questions by exclaiming “Kwatz!” which has no literal meaning. In the following examples, Lin-chi’s “Kwatz!” is simply translated as “a shout”:

- (4) A monk asked, “What is the basic meaning of Buddhism?”
 The Master [Lin-chi] gave a shout.
 The monk bowed low.
 The Master said, “This fine monk is the kind who’s worth talking to!”
 (Watson 1993, p. 9)
- (5) Another monk asked, “What is the basic meaning of Buddhism?”
 The Master [Lin-chi] gave a shout.
 The monk bowed low.
 The Master said, “Do you think that was a shout of approval?”
 The monk said, “The countryside thieves have been thoroughly trounced!”
 The Master said, “What was their fault?”
 The monk said, “A second offense is not permitted!”
 The Master gave a shout. (Watson 1993, p. 14)

Zen masters also use nonverbal or “direct” methods that, like the verbal methods discussed above, appear to have no relevance to the meaning-content of the question. Two of the direct methods Suzuki identifies are gesture and striking. The examples below are two of gesture, followed by two of striking:

- (6) Monk: How were things *before* the appearance of the Buddha in the world?
 Reiun: (raises his fly whisk)
 Monk: How were things *after* the appearance of the Buddha?
 Reiun: (raises his fly whisk) (Suzuki 1949, p. 301)
- (7) Monk: One light divides itself into hundreds of thousands of lights; may I ask where this one light originates?
 Joshu: (throws off one shoe without a remark) (Suzuki 1949, p. 271)
- (8) The Master [Lin-chi] asked a monk, “Where did you come from?”
 The monk gave a shout.
 The Master bowed slightly and motioned for him to sit down.
 The monk was about to say something, whereupon the Master struck him a blow.
 (Watson 1993, p. 84)
- (9) A certain distinguished monk named Ting came to the Master [Lin-chi] for an interview and asked, “What is the basic meaning of Buddhism?”
 The Master got down from his chair, grabbed hold of him and gave him a slap.
 Then he let him go.
 Ting stood in a daze.
 A monk standing nearby said, “Mr. Ting, why don’t you make a bow?”
 As Ting was making a formal bow, he suddenly had a great enlightenment. (Watson 1993, p. 97)

Using ethnomethodology and conversation analysis, the “practical methods of Zen instruction” identified by Suzuki (1949) can be further analyzed as orderly interactional accomplish-

ments with distinctive features. In describing the interactional form of some of Suzuki's "practical methods," it will be informative to discuss first the conversation analytic notion of an "adjacency pair," a class of widely used conversational sequences (Schegloff and Sacks 1973). Adjacency pairs are paired actions that include question-answer, greeting-greeting, and invitation-acceptance/refusal. Each pair type consists of a first pair part (e.g., a question) and a second pair part (e.g., an answer). Furthermore, adjacency pairs exhibit the following features (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, pp. 295-296):

1. two utterance length,
2. adjacent positioning of component utterances,
3. different speakers producing each utterance,
4. relative ordering of parts, and
5. discriminative relations.

The following is a "clear case" of a question-answer adjacency pair (Schegloff 1984, p. 33):

A: What time is it?

B: It's noon.

The sequence consists of (1) two utterances that are (2) positioned adjacently and are (3) produced by different speakers. Furthermore, (4) the question precedes the answer and (5) the two pair parts have discriminative relations in that the pair type, question-answer, of which the first pair part is a member is relevant to the selection of the second pair part. In other words, "a basic rule of adjacency pair operation is: given the recognizable production of a first pair part, on its first possible completion its speaker should stop and a next speaker should start and produce a second pair part from the pair type of which the first is recognizably a member" (Schegloff and Sacks 1973, p. 296).

Returning to Suzuki's (1949) "practical methods of Zen instruction," the methods of affirmation, exclamation, gesture, and striking share many of the same features of the question-answer adjacency pair. For example, the cases of affirmation (1, 2, and 3) exhibit the first four features of an adjacency pair: (1) two utterance length, (2) adjacent positioning of component utterances, (3) different speakers producing each utterance, and (4) relative ordering of parts. However, they do not appear to possess the fifth feature—discriminative relations. In other words, each second utterance is a statement that does not appear to be of the same pair type (question-answer) as the first utterance. Similarly, each case of exclamation (4 and 5) exhibits the first four features of adjacency pairs; even though the second pair part is simply a shout, rather than a statement, it still qualifies as an "utterance."

Although the direct methods of gesture (6 and 7) and striking (8 and 9) involve bodily actions, they are quite similar to the verbal methods of affirmation and exclamation. If the word "utterance" is replaced with the word "action" in the five features of adjacency pairs, then, like affirmations and exclamations, gesture and striking would exhibit the first four features of adjacency pairs, but not the fifth. Although in some types of adjacency pairs a bodily action may be discriminatively related to a first utterance (e.g., a wave of the hand in a greeting-greeting), the bodily actions involved in the above cases of gesture and striking do not

appear to display discriminative relevance for the utterances they follow—they don't appear to answer the questions.

Hence, in the case of each "practical method," the Zen masters violate conventional conversational practices by deviating from the "basic rule" of adjacency pair operation. That is, in using affirmation, exclamation, gesture, and striking, Zen masters fail to produce an answer in the next turn when asked a question by a student.

Although coparticipants in a conversation tend to follow the "basic rule" of adjacency pair operation, deviations are common. John Heritage (1984, p. 253) notes that in most cases of deviation, when the selected speaker fails to produce, in the next turn, a second pair part of the pair type of the first utterance, speakers display an orientation to the normative accountability of the question-answer pair structure. For example, one common class of cases in which questions are not followed by answers in the next turn is that in which the selected speaker proposes ignorance of the substance of the question. For example (Heritage 1984, p. 249):

M: What happened at work, at Bullocks this evening?

P: Well, I don't know.

In this case, by proposing ignorance ("Well, I don't know") the selected speaker displays an orientation to the question-answer pair structure and acknowledges that an answer is due, despite the fact that it cannot be provided, rather than simply ignoring the question. Another common class of deviations includes cases like the following (Heritage 1984, p. 251; Schegloff 1972, p. 78):

A: Are you coming tonight?

B: Can I bring a guest?

A: Sure.

B: I'll be there.

In this case, B fails to produce an answer to A's question in the next turn, but B's response displays an orientation to the question-answer pair structure by virtue of the fact that it has an "analyzable relatedness" to A's question (Heritage 1984, p. 251). That is, B's counterquestion ("Can I bring a guest?") can be seen as relevant for reaching an answer and thus accountably displays an orientation to the question-answer pair structure.

The Zen masters' "practical methods" differ from cases of "proposing ignorance" and "asking analyzably related counterquestions" in that they *do not* display an orientation to the normative accountability of the question-answer pair structure—they do not provide an account for the absence of the answer. The unique feature of the Zen masters' violations of conventional conversational practices is not that they fail to provide an answer in the next turn, but that they do so *unaccountably*. In this way the Zen masters' practical methods are very similar to Harold Garfinkel's "breaching experiments." Garfinkel (1963, p. 217; 1967, pp. 37-38) studied the basic assumptions, or "background expectancies," of everyday life by deliberately violating them. For example, in order to breach the "interchangeability of standpoints,"¹⁵ Garfinkel (1963, p. 223) instructed his students "to enter a store, to select a customer, and to treat the customer as a clerk while giving no recognition that the subject was any other person than the experimenter took him to be and without giving any indication that the experi-

menter's treatment was anything other than perfectly reasonable and legitimate." The students reported that violating this basic assumption produced confusion and anger on the part of the "subjects." According to Garfinkel, breaching the background expectancies of the attitude of daily life violates people's basic sense of social "trust." Both Zen masters' practical methods and Garfinkel's breaching experiments can throw the unsuspecting student or subject into a momentary state of senselessness.

If the ethnomethodological aim of basing one's analysis on members' analyses is to be followed, it must be shown that the participants in the interaction treat the Zen masters' actions as unaccountable deviations. Unfortunately, the cases of affirmations cited above do not include the students' responses to the Zen masters' actions, but the others do. For example, in case 4, the monk displays his acceptance of the master's exclamation as an accountable response to his question by initiating the closing of the interaction with a bow. Note that the student gives no indication that the master's shout was not the type of response projected by his question. The master then displays his agreement with the monk's interpretation of his exclamation by stating, "This fine monk is the kind who's worth talking to!" In case 6, after the master raises his fly whisk in response to the monk's question, the monk asks another question (to which he receives the same response), displaying his acceptance of the master's gesture as an accountable response to his first question. Therefore, because the students in these cases treat the Zen masters' exclamation and gesture as accountable responses to their questions, there is no basis in *these particular interactions* for calling the Zen masters' methods "unaccountable deviations from the basic rule of adjacency pair operation." Instead the Zen masters and students are using unique types of adjacency pairs (question-exclamation and question-gesture), which they make accountable in these specific settings. Of course, Zen masters also use ordinary question-answer adjacency pairs on many occasions, but when they respond to questions with "exclamations" or "gestures," they signal to the student that they are expressing "ultimate truth" rather than "conventional truth."

To those trained in Zen Buddhism and Zen interaction, such as the monks and students in the cases cited above, Zen masters' practical methods of instruction are treated as accountable responses to questions. I would speculate, however, that to those who are unfamiliar with Zen settings, Zen masters' practical methods would be treated, at least initially, as "unaccountable deviations from the basic rule of adjacency pair operation," although the data presented above do not include such cases. That is, the questioners would attempt to repair the deviation and pursue the overdue answer, or they might take the absence of an answer as intentional and, therefore, as a display of "rudeness," "disrespect," or some other such attitude. By breaching everyday conversational conventions, Zen masters help facilitate dereifying perception in their students by exposing the constructed or achieved nature of social reality.

Koan Training

The recorded *mondos* of Zen masters throughout the centuries and the practical methods of Zen instruction identified by Suzuki (1949) are important elements in the current Zen practice of *koan* training. Often *mondos* themselves are used as *koans*, such as the *koan* "Mu!" (see above). After students meditate on a *koan* in "sitting meditation" (*zazen*), they appear before the teacher in either a private interview (*dokusan*) or a public interview (*shosan*) to offer a "solution" to the *koan*. But in trying to solve the *koan*, the students soon find that every attempt to interpret the meaning of the *koan* fails the test. For example, Joshu's "Mu!" may be interpreted as a denial of a major Mahayana doctrine. Mahayana schools of Buddhism,

including Zen, believe that all sentient beings possess “Buddha-nature” (*tathagata-garbha*), the innate potential to attain enlightenment. Joshu’s response “Mu!” which literally means “No!” to the question “Has a dog Buddha-nature or not?” appears to be a contradiction of Mahayana doctrine. But such an analytic interpretation will never lead to an acceptable “solution” to the *koan*.¹⁶ Instead, students are instructed to “demonstrate” their understanding in a “direct” or “living” manner without relying on words or ideas. Yasutani-roshi explains to a student (quoted in Kapleau 1965, p. 142):

Literally, the expression means “no” or “nothing,” but the significance of Joshu’s answer does not lie in the word. Mu is the expression of the living, functioning, dynamic Buddha-nature. What you must do is discover the spirit or essence of this Mu, not through intellectual analysis but by searching into your innermost being. Then you must demonstrate before me, concretely and vividly, that you understand Mu as living truth, without recourse to conceptions, theories, or abstract explanations. Remember, you can’t understand Mu through ordinary cognition; you must grasp it directly with your whole being.

The correct manner in which to “demonstrate” one’s understanding “concretely and vividly . . . without recourse to conceptions, theories, or abstract explanations,” and hence, to solve the *koan*, is to respond spontaneously to the teacher’s question without hesitation and without any concern for the rationality of one’s response. This type of solution resembles the practical methods of Zen instruction identified by Suzuki (1949).

In a conversation analytic study of public teacher-student interviews (*shosan* or “Dharma combat”) in a North American Zen monastery, Richard Buttny and Thomas Isbell (1991) examine “demonstrations of understanding” in *koan* training. The teacher’s presentation of the *koan*, in their data (Buttny and Isbell 1991, p. 294), is too long to reproduce here, but the gist of it is this: The teacher reads a statement by the Zen master Mumon in which he lists all of the activities that appear to constitute the whole of Zen practice and then says that they are all incorrect. The teacher then asks, given Mumon’s statement, “How will you practice?” Hence, the question would appear to common sense to be impossible to answer without completely rejecting Zen. Buttny and Isbell (1991, pp. 299-303) first found that, in the course of a teacher-student interview, the teacher will call on the student to “demonstrate” his or her understanding. The following encounter contains a typical case of what Buttny and Isbell (1991) refer to as a “call for demonstration”:

(10) NINTH TEACHER-STUDENT ENCOUNTER

T: . . . so how- how to do it

(0.9)

S: In everything in everything

(1.0)

S: If >you’re if you’re one< with:

(7.2)

S: if you’re one with that moment

T: What is that (.) to be one with that moment

(6.3)

T: When you’re re:ally: *be the thing itself* what is that?

(4.6)

T: That’s *emptiness*: (1.3) *sunyata* (0.8) *body and mind fall away*

- (1.5)
 1→ T: *So show me emptiness:* (1.0) right now
 2→ (5.0)
 3→ T: You're working on the right koan to find out=
 S: =HA Ha ha
 T: Keep going
 S: .Hh Thank you

The teacher calls on the student for a "demonstration" of his understanding of "emptiness" (*sunyata*), rather than for an intellectual interpretation of it, when he says, "So show me emptiness right now" (arrow 1). The teacher's challenge is followed by a five-second gap (arrow 2) that the teacher interprets as an inability on the part of the student to meet the challenge, as is displayed in the teacher's statement, "You're working on the right koan to find out" (arrow 3). In none of the cases in Buttny and Isbell's data (1991) does a student successfully "solve" the *koan*.¹⁷

The "call for demonstration" is a device that also occurs in other data given in *The Three Pillars of Zen* by Roshi Philip Kapleau (1965). These data consist of transcripts of private student-teacher interviews (*dokusan*) that took place in Japan between Yasutani-roshi and Western students who were beginners in Zen training. The purpose of several of the interviews was *koan* training. In the following interview, the teacher (*roshi*) calls on the student to demonstrate understanding:

(11) STUDENT B

- 1→ STUDENT: [excitedly] I know what Mu is! This is Mu in one situation [picking up the roshi's baton]. In another this would be Mu [lifting another object]. Other than that I don't know.
 2→ ROSHI: That is not bad. If you really knew what you meant by "I don't know," your answer would be even better. It is obvious that you will think of yourself as an entity standing apart from other entities. [Portion omitted in which Roshi reviews some points from a morning lecture on Self-realization.]
 ROSHI: You must let go of logical reasoning and grasp the real thing!
 STUDENT: I can do that—yes, I can!
 3→ ROSHI: Very well, tell me at once what the size of the Real You is!
 STUDENT: [pausing] Well . . . it depends on the circumstances. In one situation I may be one thing; in another, something else.
 ROSHI: Had you realized the truth, you could have given a concrete answer instantaneously. When I reach out with both arms this way [demonstrating], how far do they extend? Answer at once!
 4→ STUDENT: [pausing] I don't know. All I know is that sometimes I feel I am this stick and sometimes I feel I am something else—I'm not sure what.
 ROSHI: You are almost there. Don't become lax now—do your utmost!
 (Kapleau 1965, pp. 112-113)

The interview commences when the student enters the teacher's chambers and announces, "I know what Mu is!" (arrow 1). The student then employs "direct methods" similar to those examined above (6 and 7) by picking up the teacher's baton and lifting another object as his response to the question, "What is Mu?" The teacher gives a weak approval of student's

solution but then calls for another demonstration at arrow 3, "Tell me at once what the size of the Real You is!" In response, the student pauses and then gives an analytical answer. The teacher evaluates this answer negatively, saying that if he had really "realized the truth" he could have given a "concrete" and "instantaneous" answer. Again at arrow 4 the teacher calls on the student to demonstrate his understanding by asking, "When I reach out with both arms this way, how far do they extend?" The student responds, "I don't know."

In another interview from Kapleau's data, the roshi produces a "call for demonstration":

(12) STUDENT J

STUDENT: My koan is "Who am I?"

1→ ROSHI: [sharply] Who are you?

STUDENT: [No answer.]

2→ ROSHI: Who are you!

STUDENT: [pausing] I don't know. . . .

[Portion omitted.]

ROSHI: When you come to the sudden inner realization of your True-nature, you will be able to respond instantly without reflection.

3→ What is this [suddenly striking tatami mat with baton]?

STUDENT: [No answer.]

ROSHI: Probe further! Your mind is almost ripe. (Kapleau 1965, p. 153)

At arrows 1, 2, and 3, the teacher calls for a demonstration of understanding on the part of the student with the questions, "Who are you?" and "What is this?" The student is unable to give a satisfactory answer to any of the teacher's calls for demonstration.

On another occasion, the teacher again calls for a demonstration from the same student:

(13) STUDENT J

STUDENT: My eyes are strange. They feel as though they are looking not outward but inward, asking, "Who am I?"

ROSHI: Excellent!

→ [Suddenly] Who are You?

STUDENT: [No answer] (Kapleau 1965, p. 156)

Again the student is unable to give a satisfactory answer to the teacher's call for demonstration, "Who are You?"

Although neither in Buttny and Isbell's (1991) nor in Kapleau's (1965) data are there cases of a student satisfying a teacher's "call to demonstration" and "solving" a *koan*, in both sets of data the teachers instruct the students on how to do so. According to these teachers, the appropriate way for students to "demonstrate" their understanding of a *koan* is to employ, in an original and spontaneous manner, methods that correspond to the practical methods of Zen instruction identified by Suzuki (1949). In the following encounter from Kapleau's (1965, p. 121) data, the teacher instructs the student on how to answer a *koan*:

(14) STUDENT C

- 1→ ROSHI: When I ask students to show me Mu some seize my baton, others hold up a finger, still others embrace me, like this [embracing student].
- STUDENT: I know all that, but if I did it, it would be premeditated, not spontaneous.
- ROSHI: That is true of course. When you actually experience Mu you will be able to respond spontaneously. But you must stop reasoning and just engross yourself in Mu.
- 2→

In this interview, the roshi instructs the student that various bodily actions, or direct methods, (arrow 1) are appropriate responses to a "call for demonstration." Furthermore, he informs the student that when he has experienced Mu, he will be able to respond spontaneously (arrow 2). Yasutani-roshi identifies the spontaneity of the response as a feature of an appropriate "solution" to a *koan*. In earlier transcripts, Yasutani-roshi tells one student that when he has realized the truth, he will be able to respond "instantaneously" (11) and another student that he "will be able to respond instantly without reflection" (12). By requiring an instantaneous response, the teacher prevents students from reflecting on the situation and using their intellects.

Buttny and Isbell's (1991) data also contain cases in which the teacher instructs students on how to give an appropriate answer to the *koan*. Buttny and Isbell found that not only did the teacher call on students for a demonstration of their understanding, but that sometimes students called on the teacher for a demonstration of his understanding. The following are three cases of a teacher's response to a student's "call for demonstration":

(15) SIXTH TEACHER-STUDENT ENCOUNTER

S: Shosanshi show me this don't know mind
(3.5)

→ T: Huh sun ri:ses: (1.1) in the east sets in the west

(16) THIRD TEACHER-STUDENT ENCOUNTER

S: If the buddha (1.0) banged on the *door* (1.1) or on the *floor* (1.5) or on the wall:s during the service (2.0) would ya turn him away:? (0.9) if he refused to observe the rule of silence? (1.0) or would ya hit him over the head with the rule book (1.6) or *what*
(1.3)

→ T: ((slaps floor four times loudly))

S: ((leaves))

(17) FIFTH TEACHER-STUDENT ENCOUNTER

S: How's your pract- ((clears throat)) how's your practice progressing Dido
(1.3)

→ T: Ahh:: URGH:: MMMM::nn:: HAAaa::
(2.8)

S: Can't seem to get anywhere?
(4.9)

T: *Do you understand?*

S: *No*

By responding to the students' calls for demonstration, the teacher models acceptable "solutions" to the *koan*. In the first demonstration (15), the teacher appears to use the method of affirmation, by responding to the student's call with the irrelevant statement, "Huh sun rises in the east sets in the west." In the next demonstration (16), the teacher uses a direct method by responding to the call with a bodily action, slapping the floor four times. Finally, in the third demonstration (17), the teacher's response, "Ahh:: URGH:: MMMM::nn:: HAAaa::," looks very similar to what Suzuki (1949) calls "exclamation."

To summarize, the "practical methods of Zen instruction" are important for the Zen practice of *koan* training. Zen masters use the practical methods to direct the students' attention toward living experience, or *durée*, and away from reflective experience or intellectual thinking. Suzuki (1949, p. 300) explains:

The idea of direct method appealed to by the masters is to get hold of this fleeting life as it flees and not after it has flown. While it is fleeing, there is no time to recall memory or to build ideas. No reasoning avails here. Language may be used, but this has been associated too long with ideation, and has lost directness or being by itself. As soon as words are used, they express meaning, reasoning; they have no direct connection with life, except being a faint echo or image of something that is no longer here. This is the reason why the masters often avoid such expressions or statements as are intelligible in any logical way.

Hence, in Zen, the practical methods are used to demonstrate one's understanding that "ultimate truth" lies in *durée*, or living experience, and not in intellectual representations and reifications of reality. In other words, these practical methods are used to demonstrate one's understanding of "emptiness" (*sunyata*) and one's dereifying perspective.

CONCLUSION

The goal of this article has been to develop the concept of "dereification" in religion beyond Berger's (1967) work and to explain certain aspects of Zen Buddhism. To this end, I have argued that, contrary to Bell (1979), Preston (1988), and Wilson (1984), conversion to Zen Buddhism is a resocialization process characterized by the acquisition of dereifying perception. Zen Buddhism, by virtue of the Mahayana notion of "emptiness" (*sunyata*), contains a conception of dereification that is consistent with the work of Berger and his colleagues (1965; 1966; 1967), Maynard and Wilson (1980), Thomason (1982), and Pollner (1991). Dereification is the perception of the objects of the social world as socially relative and as dependent on human perception and activity. In addition, according to the concept of "dependent co-arising" (*pratitya-samutpada*) and reflexive determination (Maynard and Wilson 1980), the identity of any social object exists only by virtue of its relationship to the entire context in which it appears, including not only its surroundings but also the perceiver. The perception of emptiness and dereifying perception entail the appreciation of an object's dependence on its context and of reality as a seamless whole.

Next, the basis of the Zen practitioner's dereifying perspective is the *experience* of emptiness, which is attained primarily through the practice of "sitting meditation" (*zazen*). The meditative state of "no-mind" (*mushin*) consists of "living experience," or *durée*, which is empty of reflective consciousness and, therefore, of spatio-temporal constructions, of a discrete self or "I," and of abstract meaning. In addition to being a state of *durée*, the meditative state is focused on the performance of mental and/or bodily actions—what Schutz calls per-

forming and working, respectively. The meditative state of no-mind and *satori* are not other-worldly but correspond to a *pure* form of the natural attitude of daily life, one that is empty of enclaves of reflective consciousness.

Finally, Zen practitioners demonstrate their understanding of emptiness and their dereifying perspective to each other in face-to-face interaction through a variety of "practical methods" identified by Suzuki (1949). These methods consist of distinctive adjacency pairs that include, but are not limited to, question-affirmation, question-exclamation, question-gesture, and question-striking. They enable the Zen practitioner to demonstrate the understanding that "ultimate truth" is to be found in living experience rather than in linguistic and conceptual representations of reality. Adequate "solutions" to *koans* consist of the spontaneous use of these methods.

While earlier accounts of dereification in religion (Berger 1967) have remained at a very general theoretical level, I have attempted to give a more empirical account of dereification by showing (1) that it corresponds to a concept used by religious practitioners themselves, emptiness, (2) that it is developed through particular religious practices, meditation, and (3) that it is involved in actual forms of religious interaction, *koan* training. At the same time, I have attempted to explain these aspects of Zen Buddhism.

Future research should look for evidence of dereification in religions other than Zen Buddhism. Research questions might include: Do other religions contain concepts similar to reification or dereification? Do other types of religious meditation produce dereifying perception? Is dereification in religion as rare as Berger asserts? In addition, research should examine the consequences of a dereifying perspective for a religion's organizational structure. According to Berger (1967), in the majority of religions, reification functions to stabilize the authority of various social institutions; therefore, religions that promote a dereifying perspective should have distinctive types of authority structures. In a similar vein, what motivates the members of dereifying religions to adhere to moral codes that, after all, are socially relative? Dereification is a subtle and profound feature of religion that deserves much more sociological attention.

NOTES

1. Berger developed this theory with Stanley Pullberg (Berger and Pullberg 1965) and Thomas Luckmann (Berger and Luckmann 1966). From here forward, I will refer to Berger and Pullberg (1965), Berger and Luckmann (1966), and Berger (1967) simply as "Berger and his colleagues."

2. These authors also use the term "deconditioning" interchangeably with desocialization.

3. For example, Franz Alexander (1923) claims that Buddhist meditation practices cause a reversal of normal psychological development and extreme regression to an infantile, narcissistic state.

4. Because Berger and his colleagues (1965, p. 200; 1967, p. 86) define reification in terms of alienation, the terms "dealienating religion" and "dereifying religion" are conceptually equivalent. I chose the term "dereifying" so that I could tie Berger's discussion of religion to other conceptions of reification.

5. If "mysticism" is defined in terms of dereification, then the opposing extreme might be "fundamentalism," which would be defined as religion that involves extreme reification of religious objects and ideas. Although most mainstream religions involve some degree of reification according to Berger (1967), the term "fundamentalism" would apply only to those religions that show the highest degree of reification, in other words, believing in the literal word of doctrine and being extremely intolerant of those who hold opposing views of the world. Thus a fundamentalism-mysticism continuum could be defined in terms of degrees of reification.

6. Thomason also offers a Schutzian conception of reification, but I do not agree with his definition because he confounds reification with typification (i.e. abstraction or objectification). However, I concur with his definition of dereification.

7. Elsewhere Pollner (1987, pp. 129-132) briefly describes Zen Buddhism as a “philosophical critique of mundane reason”; however, he does not discuss the radical reflexivity of the Zen Buddhist perspective.

8. Buddhist scholars tend to use the expression “before the common era” (B.C.E.) in place of B.C. and “of the common era” (C.E.) in place of “A.D.”.

9. The Sanskrit term, *sunyata*, is pronounced “shoon-yah-tah.”

10. My understanding of the concept of *sunyata* is largely influenced by Professor Minoru Kiyota at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In his lectures, Professor Kiyota defines *sunyata* as a principle that “unfreezes fixed and frozen concepts” and extreme dichotomies. This “unfreezing” is dereification.

11. While Preston argues that Schutz’s phenomenology is inadequate for describing Zen meditation because it qualifies neither as conduct nor as action, I think this is an oversimplification. Preston (1988, pp. 86-87) equates “conduct” and “action” with “passive” and “active” behavior, respectively, asserting that Zen meditation involves a special attitude of “active passivity” that he defines as “a posture of wakeful attentiveness that is at the same time a nondoing.” As a concept, “active passivity” is not clear. More importantly, the concept does not preclude Zen meditation from being “action” in the Schutzian sense. Furthermore, Preston claims that Schutz fails to account for “regulated improvisation,” which he defines as “conduct that is perceived by others as appropriate, even exemplary, yet not planned in advance” (Preston 1988, p. 145). Preston’s (1988, pp. 86-87) objections may stem from a misunderstanding of what Schutz means by action being “planned in advance.” First, although action is guided by a plan that is formulated in conscious awareness, this plan does not necessarily occupy awareness *during* the course of the action. According to Schutz (1932, p. 63; 1962, p. 214), the actor *can* continually bring the plan back to attention while acting but more often the plan is out of awareness even while guiding the action. Second, regulated improvisation is only one segment of a larger action. That is, although Zen meditators may not have planned out everything that they will do during a meditation session, they are formulating a plan of action when they decide to go to the meditation hall and to begin a particular type of meditation. Meditation is done correctly when the plan to meditate is kept out of consciousness and concentration is maintained throughout the session, but the plan is what sets the activity in motion in the first place and what gives it continuity throughout.

12. Again, Preston objects to the use of Schutz’s phenomenology on the grounds that, under Schutz’s definition, the meditative state cannot be the most “wide-awake,” which contradicts the experience of Zen meditators, since only performing and working (forms of action) are the most wide-awake. As stated above, meditation *is* action, and thus Preston’s objection is unfounded. Meditation is both performing and working: performing in that it involves maintaining a specific mental posture and working in that it involves maintaining a specific bodily posture.

13. Experiences of uninterrupted performing or working and of Zen meditation are equivalent to what Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1975) calls “flow” states. Csikszentmihalyi found that when people are engaged in demanding activities, they may become so fully absorbed in the activity that all awareness of time, space, and self vanishes. Csikszentmihalyi calls this experience of absorption in activity “flow.” Furthermore, Csikszentmihalyi found that “flow” states are “autotelic” or intrinsically satisfying to the experiencer. Csikszentmihalyi’s work on “flow” states has recently become of interest in the sociology of religion because of the similarity between “flow” states and “religious experiences” (see Neitz and Spickard 1990).

14. The status of these recorded sayings as data is questionable because their accuracy cannot be verified and because they have been translated from Chinese into English or even perhaps from Chinese into Japanese into English. However, because these records have been used by subsequent Zen practitioners up to the present as models for the correct demonstration of emptiness, I believe it will still be useful to analyze them. In the next section, I will show the relevance of these records for some modern day Zen interactions.

15. The "interchangeability of standpoints" is a basic assumption of everyday life, identified by Schutz, which can be stated as: "a person takes for granted, assumes that the other person does the same, and assumes that as he assumes for the other the other assumes for him, that if they were to change places so that the other person's here-and-now became his, and his became the other person's, that the person would see events in the same typical way as does the other person, and the other person would see them in the same typical way as he does" (Garfinkel 1963, p. 212).

16. Instead of giving an ordinary answer, Joshu appears to be using "contradiction," another of Suzuki's practical methods not discussed above, which consists of an unqualified denial of an earlier statement of one's own, of the statement of another, or of a well-established fact (Suzuki 1949, p. 279).

17. There is one case in which a student successfully defends her answer against the teacher's challenges (Buttny and Isbell 1991, pp. 299-300), but it is not clear if this defense constitutes a "solution" to the *koan*.

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