

# Between terror and ecstasy

## Artistic hallucination

Jean-François Chevrier

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The term hallucination was applied retrospectively to the visions of the mystics in their state of ecstasy, such as those of the characters in the Christian story, in particular the hermit saints such as St. Anthony, or Christ himself, who had been subjected to temptation by the devil. Thus, a psychological (or, more precisely, psychophysiological) explanation was given to experiences traditionally attributed to the supernatural, and of which artists had provided countless more or less fantastical representations. This amounted to the naturalisation of the irrational. Thomas Carlyle (*Sartor Resartus*, 1831) spoke of 'natural supernaturalism'. The hallucinatory vision was the 'elsewhere' of realism.