

Western

All behavior involves learned games but only that rare Westerner, we call “mystic” or who has had a visionary experience sees clearly the game structure of behavior.

If the religious vigor of a Westerner is enhanced by rich, mystical understanding, this is certainly preferable to a foolish allegiance to a dead faith.

If we could translate the modern Western theory of relativity into experience, we should have what the Chinese and Indians call the Absolute.

Many non-Western cultures provide occasions during which their people may become familiar with a broad range of nonordinary realities.

Mysticism in the form of realizing that one’s true self is the Godhead is something that Western society would not tolerate.

Our Western culture makes virtually no use of altered states of consciousness and tends to regard all of them as pathological states.

Some of the highest spirits of the West have spoken through music, expressing through sound something of the upper reaches of consciousness.

The either/or insistence of the Western mind is abandoned in favor of a both/and approach to life.

The intelligent use of psychedelic drugs required a new professional, unfamiliar to the Western world, the brain guide. The multiple-reality coach.

The kingly concept of God makes identity of self and God or self and universe, inconceivable in Western religious terms.

The power of substances to produce altered states of consciousness is understood by Western scientists in biochemical rather than supernatural terms.

The spiritual crisis pervading all spheres of Western industrial society can be remedied only by a change in our world view.

The usual Western concept of God is the conscious ruler and controller, the absolute dictator.

The very use of the term “the unconscious” for the inmost depths reveals how little Western man knows of what is actually his central consciousness.

The West knows all about machines and fails to realize that all the wisdom has come from the East.

The Western scientific view considers matter as primary. The mystical view regards consciousness as the primary reality and ground of all being.

There has been no recognition of spirituality in Western psychiatry and no notion that there might be some difference between mysticism and psychosis.

Transpersonal psychology brings together the ancient wisdom and spiritual systems of the world and the pragmatism of Western science.

Unfortunately, most Western neuroscientists look down their noses at the Oriental literature of consciousness.

Very few people, and we Westerners call them mystics, are willing and able to admit that the game is a game.

Western culture seems at the moment spiritually disintegrated beyond hope of reconstruction.

Western civilization, since the Renaissance, is one of the few social orders that does not provide for emotionally powerful rites of renewal and emergence.

Western literature had almost no guides, no maps, no texts that even recognize the existence of altered states.

Western psychology has ignored the possibilities of mind-expansion and has become almost externally oriented.

Western psychology is so narrow as to be mostly trivial— consciousness is eliminated from the field of inquiry.

Western psychology recognizes no methods or possibilities of getting off the imprint board.

Western religions call any idea about an inner level at which God and man are identical, pantheism.

Western scholars have greatly underestimated the importance of these drugs to the cultures that use them.

Western theology has tended to be out of touch with the mystical roots of religious experience.

Westerners see the ego-loss experience confused with schizophrenia because they can't label it and therefore it can't be investigated.

What is lacking in the Western mind is the sense of connectivity and relatedness to the rest of life.

With LSD, we had found the means with which our Western kind of civilization could be renewed by the discovery of new mysteries.

With very rare exceptions, that which is truly subjective and interior has thus far remained entirely hidden from Western man.

After such experiences, contemplation may take on new meaning for the Western man who finds little time to ponder the meaning of his own existence and the philosophical presuppositions upon which his religious, political, scientific, and ethical convictions rest.

In light of the overwhelming evidence we have regarding visionary experiences in virtually every area of life, it is remarkable to think that traditional Western science continues to ignore this crucial force in human history.

In the West, Nature has been completely isolated from the religious context in which our ancestors used to view it. Our non-human environment and our own physical existence have now become domains exclusively reserved for science. (What a mistake.)

It was clear that the range of lifestyles and outlook that my society had shown me ran the gamut from A to B; so like many others of my generation, I began exploring non-Western philosophies and concepts.

Jung and his followers brought to the attention of Western psychology the utmost significance of all the symbolic variations on the theme of death and rebirth in our archetypal heritage. (This is way beyond what Freud knew, wrote or talked about.)

Let us try to bring about a new and glowing synthesis, a new higher consciousness that brings together the East and West, the head and the heart, science and spirituality and knowledge and wisdom. (Knowledge and wisdom are not the same.)

The difficulty of making equations and comparisons between Eastern and Western ideas is that the two worlds do not start with the same assumptions and premises. They do not have the same basic categorizations of experience.

The existence and nature of these experiences could not be explained in the context of the mainstream theories and seriously undermined the metaphysical assumptions on which Western culture is built.

The importance and value of transpersonal experiences is extraordinary. It is a great irony and one of the paradoxes of modern science that phenomena with a therapeutic potential transcending what Western psychiatry has to offer are, by and large, seen as pathological.

the Western discovery of the creative power of “no-thought” and contemplation without strained attention. Such a mode of awareness is essential when research is expected to bring forth new concepts.

The Western man who claims consciousness of oneness with God or the universe clashes with his society’s concept of religion. In most Asian countries, however, such a man will be congratulated as having penetrated the true secret of life. He has arrived.

Traditional Western scientists like to assume an all-knowing position and discard any notion of spirituality as primitive superstition, regressive magical thinking, lack of education, or clinical psychopathology.

Western psychology and psychiatry are seriously biased. They consider their own idiosyncratic point of view to be superior to that of any other cultural group and label as pathological any activities that they cannot understand in their own framework.

With the ego and mind unplugged, what is left? It’s something Western culture knows little about, the open brain, the uncensored cortex, activated, alert, open to new realities, open to a broad sweep of internal and external stimuli hitherto screened out.

As many began to experience the kinds of images and symbols Jung ascribed to the collective unconscious, as well as episodes of a classic mystical nature, this wave brought strong supportive evidence for Jungian ideas and a powerful validation of the mystical traditions of the world, Eastern as well as Western.

How can we Westerners see that our own potentials are much greater than the social-hive games in which we are so blindly trapped? Once the game structure of behavior is seen, change in behavior can occur with dramatic spontaneity. The visionary, brain-change, consciousness-altering experience is the key to behavior change.

I would say that the mind is not insular, but an interconnected part of a universe of both physical and symbolic substance, whose linkages extend throughout space and time. The Psychedelic has helped me to feel like a part of this connection. I feel like I have a much greater understanding of non-Western and pre-industrial mind-sets.

In view of the enormous variety and scope of these phenomena, most of which lie far beyond the conceptual framework of traditional psychology and the philosophy of Western science, it is not surprising that Western scientists and educated laypersons alike tend to take these claims with a grain of salt.

Introducing transpersonal experiences into psychology creates a conceptual bridge between Western science and perennial philosophy. It also throws new light on many problems in history, anthropology, sociology, psychology, psychiatry, philosophy, and comparative religion.

It is most curious to find, from Japan to Western Europe, these same images coming through again and again, showing how universal and how uniform this kind of visionary experience has been and how it has constantly been regarded as of immense importance and has been projected out into the cosmos in the various religious traditions.

My understanding of mystical teachings, both Eastern and Western, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Sufi alike, took on a quantum leap. I became aware of the transcendental unity at the core of all great religions, and understood for the first time the meaning of esoteric states.

Our mental functions are linked to biological processes in our brains. However, this does not necessarily mean that consciousness originates in or is produced by our brains. This conclusion made by Western science is a metaphysical assumption rather than a scientific fact, and it is certainly possible to come up with other interpretations of the same data.

Repeated experiences of the transpersonal domain can have a profound impact on the individual involved. They tend to dissolve the narrow and limited perspective characterizing the average Westerner and make one see the problems of everyday life from a cosmic perspective.

So many practitioners of the inexact sciences (e.g., psychology, anthropology, sociology) let it be known most clearly that they already know what reality is. For these poor drudges, reality is the world of nonpoetry in accordance with the great Western myth that all nature outside the human skin is a stupid and unfeeling mechanism.

The everyday clinical practice of LSD psychotherapy brings repeated evidence of the powerful healing potential of the death-rebirth process. The discovery of this potent therapeutic mechanism, as yet unrecognized and unacknowledged by Western science, represents one of the most surprising findings of my LSD research.

The idea of drug use as a religious practice—in fact, of any connection between drugs and religion—is one we are willing to indulge in pre-industrial cultures but violently

reject for ourselves. Orthodox religion in the West long ago abandoned the sacramental use of drugs.

Theoretical speculations in Western academic psychology and psychiatry are based exclusively on experiences and observations made in the ordinary states of consciousness. The evidence from the study of non-ordinary states of any kind are systematically ignored or pathologized.

Transpersonal experiences involving entities and realms that are not objectively real according to the Western worldview can convey absolutely new information. For example, in nonordinary states, many people have encountered deities and mythological realms specific to cultures about which they have no personal knowledge. (eyes closed)

Until Western science is able to offer plausible explanations of all the observations surrounding such phenomena as spiritual experiences, the concepts found in mystical and occult literature have to be seen as superior to the present approach of most Western scientists, who either do not know the facts or ignore them.

We were on our own. Western psychological literature had almost no guides, no maps, no texts that even recognized the existence of altered states. We had no rituals, traditions or comforting routines to fall back on. We avoided the sick-man atmosphere of the hospital. (That was Timothy Leary.)

When Western science dismissed the concept of consciousness after death as a fabrication based on wishful thinking and superstition, this judgment was not based on the careful study of the area in question that is otherwise characteristic of the scientific approach.

While these new territories have not yet been recognized by Western academic psychiatry, they are not, by any means, unknown to humanity. On the contrary, they have been systematically studied and held in high esteem by ancient and pre-industrial cultures since the dawn of human history.

Abraham Maslow urged that there was a need to “depathologize” the psyche, that is, to look upon the “inner core” of our being not as the source of metaphysical darkness or illness but as the source of health and as the wellspring of human creativity. It was his belief that Western civilization had obscured the importance of this inner core by approaching it more as a superstition than as a reality.

All the learned games of life can be seen as programs that select, censor and thus dramatically limit the available cortical response. Consciousness-expanding drugs unplug these narrow programs, the social ego, the game-machinery. And with the ego and mind unplugged, what is left? What is left is something that Western culture knows little about: the uncensored cortex, activated, alert and open to new realities.

As knowledge of the existence of mind-expanding plants and chemicals dawned upon the consciousness of Western man, swift re-evaluations of our attitudes toward certain so-called “primitive” tribes became necessary. It became apparent that some of these cultures had preserved the key to higher knowledge which the civilized world had relegated to the status of myth.

In Road to Eleusis authors Albert Hoffman, Gordon Wasson and Carl Ruck present convincing evidence that the Eleusinian Mysteries, the oldest religion in the West, centered around a mass tripping ritual. For 2 millennia pilgrims journeyed from all over the world to take part in the Mysteries and drink the sacred kykeon. Plato, Aristotle and Sophocles were among those who participated in this secret ritual.

In the Western world, visionaries and mystics are a good deal less common than they used to be. In the currently fashionable picture of the universe, there is no place for valid transcendental experience. Consequently, those who have had what they regard as valid transcendental experiences are looked upon with suspicion, as being either lunatics or swindlers.

So many practitioners of the inexact sciences (e.g., psychology, anthropology, sociology) let it be known most clearly that they already know what reality is and therefore what sanity is. For these poor drudges reality is the world of nonpoetry in accordance with the great Western myth that all nature outside the human skin is a stupid and unfeeling mechanism.

The average Westerner is naive about nonordinary states of consciousness and has many misconceptions and prejudices about some of the experiences that are potentially the most healing. We try to convey a clear message that such phenomena as death-rebirth sequences, archetypal visions and states of cosmic unity are absolutely normal and that having them in no way implies pathology.

The new data are of such far-reaching relevance that they could revolutionize our understanding of the human psyche. Some of the observations transcend in their significance the framework of psychology and psychiatry and represent a serious challenge to the current Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm of Western science. They could change drastically our image of human nature, of culture and history, and of reality.

The process I was witnessing in others and experiencing myself had a deep similarity with shamanic initiations, rites of passage of various cultures, and the ancient mysteries of death and rebirth. Western scientists had ridiculed and rejected these sophisticated procedures, believing that they had successfully replaced them with rational and scientifically sound approaches.

There exists ample evidence that the transcendental impulse is the most vital and powerful force in human beings. Systematic denial and expression of spirituality that is so characteristic for modern Western societies can be a critical factor contributing to the alienation, existential anxiety, individual and social psychopathology, criminality, violence and self-destructive tendencies of contemporary humanity.

There had been previous explorations. There was a history, a tradition. There were maps and guidebooks. Though trained in the Western methods of scientific research, Leary (and the rest of us) felt affirmed in our spiritual approach to psychedelic experiences by the discovery of these ancient writings. Our initial work on this text was later developed and published as *The Psychedelic Experience*. (That was Ralph Metzner.).

Traditional scientists often attribute the appreciation that non-Western societies show for shamans to the fact that these societies are unable to discriminate the abnormal from the super-normal because of their lack of education and scientific knowledge. (This is an

example of how ignorant and arrogant Western societies really are. The West has advanced in technology, but where is the wisdom?)

Western cultures have bred a type of human being who feels strongly alienated. He has lost his connection with the surrounding universe. He does not know that the “ultimate inside” of himself is the same as the “ultimate inside” of the cosmos or that, in other words, his sensation of being “I” is a glimmering intimation of what the universe itself feels like on the inside.

Western science recognizes as real only those phenomena that can be objectively observed and measured. (That’s a very naive, narrow, limited scope. Cells of the body were real before the discovery of the microscope. The earth was always round and always revolved around the sun regardless of what Western scientists know or could “objectively observe and measure”.)

Western scientific disciplines have described the universe as an infinitely complex mechanical system of interacting, discrete particles and separate objects. In this context, matter appears to be solid, inert, passive and unconscious; life, consciousness and creative intelligence are seen as insignificant accidents and derivatives of material development. (Einstein understood. Will the other Western scientists ever wake up?)

Western scientists view their own particular approach to reality and psychological phenomena as superior and “proven beyond a shadow of doubt,” while judging the perspectives of other cultures as inferior, naive, and primitive. The traditional academic approach takes into consideration only those observations and experiences that are mediated by the five senses in an ordinary state of consciousness.

With the advent of modern science, the notion of acceptable reality was narrowed to include only those aspects of existence that are material, tangible, and measurable. Spirituality in any form was exiled from the modern scientific worldview. Western cultures adopted a restricted and rigid interpretation of what is “normal” in human experience and behavior and rarely accepted those who sought to go beyond these limits.

You are holding in your hand a great human document. But unless you are one of the few Westerners who have experienced a mystical minute of expanded consciousness, you will probably not understand what the author is saying. Too bad, but still not a cause for surprise. The history of ideas reminds us that new concepts and new visions have always been non-understood. We cannot understand that for which we have no words.

In the West, we are a cult of the ego.

LSD is Western yoga.

The sexual orgasm has lost much of its mystical meaning in the West.

The Western world has been on a bad trip, a 400 year old bummer.

The Western youth today is truly seeking. (That was written in 1969.)

an exciting adventure into new territories of the mind as yet uncharted by Western science

characterized the reality in which self and world are separated as “the schizoid catastrophe, the Western neurosis”

experiential dimensions that are clearly beyond the confines of what is agreed upon in the West as objective reality

non-ordinary states of consciousness, an area grossly neglected not just by traditional science, but by the entire Western culture

to seriously review ancient and non-Western knowledge about consciousness and to aim for a genuine synthesis of age-old wisdom and modern science

the new worldview emerging in Western science, the new thinking in psychology, a new image of the psyche

the other dimension that Western man has pretty much closed off and doesn't even look at

ways of knowing and feeling that the categorical rationalism of the West fails to pick up or even denies

levels of reality denied by Western mechanistic science, but recognized and acknowledged by many ancient and non-Western cultures and by the great mystical traditions of the world

the fundamental importance of a mystical experience for the recovery of people in Western industrial societies who are sickened by a one-sided, rational, materialistic world view

Western culture's preference for consensus reality, lack of a genuine understanding of altered states of consciousness and strong tendency to pathologize all such states without discrimination (It is "consensus reality" based on ego that is really pathological.)

a lack of real understanding about nonordinary states of consciousness in Western culture a territory so alien to the Western mind

a voyage much richer in scope and meaning than any Western psychological theory as God is generally conceived in the West—to be dictator of the world

biochemical keys which unlock experiences shatteringly new to most Westerners

exploration of domains that in Western culture are not considered part of objective reality

the alienation of Western man from nature

the limitations of "Western rationality"

to free Western man from the limitations of consciousness as we know it

Western mind—a restricted view of human knowledge

Western scientists with their limited model of the human psyche