

# TOWARD A HERMENEUTICS OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

Some comparative notes on the ethnography of psychedelics

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## INTRODUCTION

The contemporary situation in the comparative study of religious phenomena by social scientists seems to be in a state of considerable disarray, if not confusion; such is the impression from a perusal of the pertinent literature on methodological and theoretical issues in the field.<sup>1</sup> Facile explanations and categorizations still are abundant, but the unity which once pervaded the field of religious studies until almost the end of the 19th century is gone. Gone is that smug security that we know at least what the phenomenon meant we were talking about and that we had just to deal with a particular perspective sliced off from reality and to designate certain functions, structural regularities and other institutionalized categories to the manifestations of the "religious" dimension in man's life and in the history of mankind. To put "order into things" appears to many writers in this field today as a dead end of the endeavour. In its stead, several major and competing schools have arisen in philosophy each of which "explains the world" from a different basis. Yet, the reception of these different philosophical approaches into the field of religious studies has not resulted in a consolidation of the divergent methods and theories. Instead, each approach claims priority over any other; dogmatism and ossification have replaced the search for a possible compromise of divergent views.

Each new approach seems to raise more questions than it is able to answer. This in itself might be conceived as a positive trait in the scholarly treatment of the subject matter, since it finally leads away from dogmatic security thus enabling the individual to be more open to multiple possibilities for viewing his personal existence in this world. But, of course, the contrary could and has been argued; an overabundance of choice leads to utter personal confusion. Yet, even assuming that we are confronted in the social life of the "average" person in industrialized societies with a continuing and accelerating tendency to individualization and secularization, as many evolutionary positivists have argued since the end of the 19th century, scholars are still divided whether this indicates an increase of individual maturity or whether it is to the contrary a sign of more confusion in the individual.

Even these simple propositions about the social life cannot be solved unequivocally, because the scholarly community—in particular in the social sciences—does not seem to be "open to the world" anymore; each

question arising from the social reality is answered by "specialists" who vie for supremacy in regard to the explanatory power of their theoretical foundations. Positivism and Neo-Positivism fight against Hermeneutics, Dialectical Schools and Critical Rationalists don't talk to one another, and Phenomenology and Neo-Marxism cannot agree with any of the other protagonists; in short, none of the "popes" of the different schools—with very few notable exceptions—seems even to be willing to learn from the other.<sup>2</sup> It should not surprise us then that the reception of the different approaches into the treatment of religious phenomena by social scientists has indeed led to utter confusion.

### AIMS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In the following paper I do not presume to offer a new definition of religious phenomena as such or to give answers to questions which the relevant authors have left open; it is rather an attempt to raise some further questions arising out of the particular field of comparative ethnographic research on the use of psychedelic agents among a variety of societies and to show the possible implications for a comparative study of religions. I hope to show the potential gain that would result from a balanced application of divergent methods to a specific problem. My major proposition relates to the category of "religious experience" the neglect of which seems to have been the main reason for the stagnation in the treatment of religious phenomena in the social sciences. The concentration on this experiential dimension requires a survey of the historical roots of the dilemma.

I propose then to show that the adherence to the stringent requirements and a priori limitations of the subject matter as imposed on the social sciences by their positivistic founders, Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, have impeded any progress toward a more inclusive treatment of the subject. I further propose to show that the method of one particular discipline within the social sciences, namely the central paradigm of "participant observation" as used by ethnographers or socio-cultural anthropologists, has the potential to enlarge the horizon of our understanding of the role of religious experiences in a comparative perspective.

I also suggest that the application of this research method to related disciplines from psychology to sociology was not by mere accident. The reception of this method does not only coincide with particular developments in the attitudes of segments of the populace in industrialized societies, namely the aspirations of the youth movement of the last decade; it also shows the resurgence of several older philosophical modes of approaching reality. Anthropologists seem on the whole to be those scholars who have constantly applied a method which was advocated for other fields of the humanities since the end of the last century, namely the hermeneutical point of view. This particular way of interpreting social facts through "empathetic understanding" grew out of the Neo-Kantian

debate and was modified by Dilthey and Weber for the study of history and sociology respectively, but it was not really taken seriously in those social sciences that turned toward empiricism.<sup>3</sup>

However, the limitations of my paper should clearly be understood: on the genuinely recalcitrant subject of religion there cannot possibly be offered any comprehensive or balanced coverage of the sciences involved, in particular not in the field of the *Experiential*. The phenomena dealt with in this paper pertain to reports on the perception of different states of reality under the influence of *psychedelic substances*. The terminology contains many controversial concepts like "altered states of consciousness" and one cannot possibly survey the literature that has accumulated on even the concept of "consciousness" alone. The introduction of the term "altered states of consciousness" into the literature immediately led to a widening of the concept to accommodate materials pertaining to the reaching of such states which are actually *not* drug-induced.

Interpretations of these multi-faceted phenomena span the whole spectrum from anthropology to psychiatry, and from philosophy to neuropharmacology. Rather than surveying each field and its contributions separately, I will point to the differences and convergences in interpretation of the same phenomenon by the various disciplines.

## HISTORICAL REASONS FOR THE STAGNATION IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Most prominent authors in the fields of the sociological and anthropological treatment of religion complain about the deficiencies concerning the results. A survey of these complaints seems to indicate a double contradiction; firstly, there is an abundance of competent studies on specific religious phenomena, but no concomitant theoretical progress for a general sociology is forthcoming; secondly, many writers in the social sciences still consider religion as a corner-stone for an adequate understanding of man's social life, but the many introductory text-books do not treat the subject in any but a perfunctory manner. Before I shall attempt to point to the roots of and the possible solution to this dilemma, I shall look at each of the two contradictions separately.

In sociology the first contradiction has been hinted at by Luckmann and Berger respectively.<sup>4</sup> Luckmann alludes that in spite of some technically competent studies on religious matters the field as a whole shows "the predominantly trivial character of the discipline".<sup>5</sup> Luckmann indicated that the theoretical paucity has largely to do with restricting the study of religious activities to institutionalized forms of behaviour, to the study of church-religions and denominations and their social relevance. Yet, I do not think that Luckmann has put his finger on the real reason underlying the theoretical barrenness of the field.

In the field of socio-cultural anthropology Luckmann's statement is supported by Clifford Geertz who said recently: "Two characteristics of

anthropological work on religion accomplished since the second world war strike me as curious when such work is placed against that carried out just before and just after the first. One is that it has made no theoretical advances of major importance. It is living off the conceptual capital of its ancestors, adding very little, save a certain empirical enrichment, to it. The second is that it draws what concepts it does use from a very narrowly defined intellectual tradition."<sup>6</sup>

To elucidate the second contradiction, we find the following statement by Weston LaBarre: . . . "the understanding of religion may be the key to an understanding of the nature and function of culture at large and hence the survival of our species. . ."<sup>7</sup> Yet, as A.F.C. Wallace has indicated almost ten years ago, this insight of the importance of religious activities is not accompanied by a systematic treatment in basic text-books.<sup>8</sup> This situation has not changed in the least.

I think both contradictions have at their root the same problem. It is not so much the non-relevance of certain methods with which the field of religion is approached, but rather the fact that sociologists and anthropologists until recently *have not asked the right questions*. And only when we ask the right question, does the problem of the appropriate method emerge. The inability to ask the relevant and important question has to do with the strong adherence of most writers in the field, including those who were cited above, to the canon of restrictions imposed upon the social sciences by Durkheim and Weber. The relevant question to ask is the following: *What is religions experience?*

We can then decide whether there are possible methodologies to elucidate this elusive category. Yet, both Durkheim and Weber have excluded this question from the realm of the "proper" social sciences. Durkheim declared as legitimate objective for sociology the search for and explanation of social facts. Although he is aware of the importance of the experiential dimension of religion, he did only admit those factors to the realm of enquiry which could be objectified, observed and validated in some form of bio-social manifestation such as rituals and myth or the socially relevant roles of religious practitioners.

It is well known that Max Weber rejected—though with a different orientation than Durkheim—the treatment of "religious experience" as legitimate pursuit of sociologists by insisting that any religious experience is irrational, and that the experience of the mystic, which is its supreme form, is incommunicable.<sup>9</sup>

All assertions of Luckmann, Berger, Geertz or Wallace notwithstanding, it is evident that both sides, sociologists as well as socio-cultural anthropologists, are still "living off the theoretical capital" of Durkheim in particular. The result is that most recent treatments of religious phenomena have become overly specialized or exhaust themselves in minute details, leaving us with a tremendous amount of empirical data, but also with the general impression of being insipid. To give but one example from the mentioned authors: Wallace equates what is focal

and important in religion with the social manifestation of ritual. He is as obsessed with "the smallest religious thing" as Marvin Harris once was with "the smallest cultural thing."<sup>10</sup> As I have pointed out in a different place, I do not think that any advance in the social sciences will ever be made if we merely and repeatedly slice the cake thinner (the ancient atomistic fallacy); rather, we may find ourselves in the midst of empirical "smallest" data going hungry for meaning.<sup>11</sup> We may, for all we know, already be at the state of "being digested" by the data, instead of having sovereignty over the "things". As Evans-Pritchard perceived the general malaise so cogently: "It is a fact, which none can deny, that the theoretical capital on which anthropologists today live is mainly the writings of people whose research was entirely literary, who brought to bear great ability, much learning, and rigorous methods of scholarship on what others had observed and recorded. When that capital is exhausted we are in danger of falling into mere empiricism, one field study after another adding to the number of known facts, but uninspired and uninspiring."<sup>12</sup>

Instead of making the daring step to incorporate the category of "religious experience" into the not so sacred canon of social enquiry, we remain basically stuck with the unease of the state of affairs which in my opinion was in the field of religious studies most clearly felt by Joachim Wach. In the beginning of his *Sociology of Religion* Wach<sup>13</sup> notes the great variability of the forms of religious expression which is backed by comparative ethnographic data which were also the empirical background for Durkheim's studies. Wach says "Thus it has been demonstrated that there is traceable through the whole history of worship an exceedingly intricate interplay between individual experience in religion and the various forms of traditional expression, all of which is an essential part of the dynamics of religion."<sup>14</sup> Before going on to classify and typologize these many forms of social expression of religious experience, Wach adds in a footnote the following comment on William James: "It is a serious shortcoming of William James' classic study. . . that it concentrates exclusively on the subjective side, which cannot possibly be fully comprehended except through an interpretation of the expressions which in turn form religious experience. The search for the 'original' experiences. . . becomes then identical with that for extremer forms; 'personal religion nakedly considered' is an abstraction without reality. . ."<sup>15</sup>

It is clear how much Wach agrees here with the stance of Durkheim as well as of Weber. It is quite surprising that Wach never came to the conclusion that under certain qualified conditions the categories of "religious experience" might be a possible subject for sociology, since at the end of the said work he states: "However, the mistake must be avoided of defining 'religion' in arbitrary fashion, in identifying it exclusively with ideas, rites, or institutions which are subject to change and transformation, instead of conceiving it as that profoundest source

from which all human existence is nourished and upon which it depends in all its aspects: man's communion with God."<sup>16</sup>

The extent to which the positivist attitude—taken to extremes—has also influenced the field of comparative religious studies and of theology may be gleaned from a comment of Lewis and Slater: "We are to be told how people bury their dead in different periods and places. . . , but what this carried with it further in the way of belief or inner experience is thought to be too treacherous a ground to venture upon."<sup>17</sup>

I think it is time to rethink our position and to integrate the category of experience into the field of social and religious studies, without necessarily throwing the results of a positivist sociology aside. After all, even the neo-positivist enterprise which insists on empirical proof for all our assertions has not achieved anything beyond a programmatic stage, as Kolakowski summarized it. It was after all Max Weber who admitted that any decision as to the object of legitimate study is in itself "irrational". Since with the category of the "religious" we are definitely in the sphere of values, I think positivism goes too far by excluding per se the whole category of "experience" from sociological analysis. It is one thing to say that within the realm of the empirical sciences we cannot possibly have scientific normative ethics and—that is the memorable lesson from positivist thinking—that ultimate evaluative assumptions can only be arbitrary; it is something quite different to say that we cannot touch the category of "religious experience" because it is non-transmittable.<sup>18</sup>

I am quite aware that I have to communicate even within this category of the "experiential" if I want to relate its contents to the outside. But let us accept at first the antinomie of cognition which entails the paradox of having to talk about something which is supposedly incommunicable. This paradoxical and maybe Quixotic search was phrased already by the mystic *Chuang Tzu*: "Where can I find a man who has forgotten words so I can have a word with him?"<sup>19</sup> I shall try to show below that the whole ethnographic enterprise has, often without consciously admitting this in written reports, continued with its field-research by living exactly in that antinomie, namely to "participate" in a way of life and at the same time to "observe" it. We shall see whether the method of "participant observation" opens a potentially new avenue to the understanding and interpreting of religious experiences. Before entering the discussion on the ethnographic approach I would like to outline some of the results that emerged from attempts to test psychologically the effects of psychedelic substances.

#### THE TESTING OF EXPERIENCES UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF PSYCHEDELIC AGENTS

The main property of all the substances labelled psychedelic by Osmond<sup>20</sup> is an ability to enhance the response to different sensory

stimuli. These substances were at first labelled psychotomimetic or psychotogenic because of their similarity to psychotic states. Included in the word hallucinogenic, or more commonly psychedelic, are all those agents which are either of chemical origin (LSD-25) or derivatives of plant substances; the plant-derivatives are generally now referred to as psychotropic (as for instance those of the fly agaric, peyote, ayahuasca or yage, ololiuqui and many others; in Central America alone more than one dozen of those plant derivatives are known to be used).<sup>21</sup> These various substances, in particular the chemical derivatives, were taken by a high percentage of members of the so-called "counter culture" in order to achieve "religious experience".

Though many authors have claimed that indeed these substances do lead to "religious and mystical" forms of awareness, evidence and proof for such contents of the mind under the influence of psychedelics is extremely sparse.<sup>22</sup> The primary difficulty consists in the impossibility of delineating "religious experience". This difficulty in comparing contents of certain experiences exists not only within one cultural realm as for instance the industrialised Euro-American, but is an even greater impediment for a cross-cultural comparative approach, since we basically still rely on analogous interpretations when we use the reported experiences of "classical mystics" to determine what a "religious experience" might or should contain. As long as no matrix of cognition for the ordering of reality in different cultures exists, the basic objection to all classificatory efforts does apply: nothing can emanate from a brain or a mind which was not there in the first place. In the alleged "religious" content and even in the motivation of members of the youth-culture to take psychedelic substances we might see nothing more than a feedback from reports and descriptions about what one should or ought to be looking for. In other words, if somebody has read and is familiar with the "in-literature" on the subject, we can expect to find exactly the "required" symptoms thrown back at the researcher: the classical case of the self-fulfilling prophecy.

This controversy is by no means settled. The most extensive and critical experiments were conducted by Pahnke<sup>23</sup> and by Masters and Houston.<sup>24</sup> Pahnke admitted that not all the symptoms of the experimental content under psychedelic influence are of a religious nature. He distinguishes five different forms of psychedelic experiences; the psychotic, psychodynamic, cognitive, aesthetic, and the transcendental or mystical one. For the latter, which is of interest here, he lists nine inter-related categories as constituent criteria. These criteria are unity, transcendence of time and space, deeply felt positive mood, a sense of sacredness, noetic quality, paradoxality, alleged ineffability of the experience, transiency and persisting positive changes in attitudes and behaviour.<sup>25</sup>

On the level of pure logical analysis this might actually not be sufficient proof at all, since parts of these criteria can be experience outside the religious realm and the listing of the said criteria in fact uses expressions

which are surely semantically ambiguous. Without taking up each of Pahnke's points, it might be of interest just to point to the dubiousness of his distinction between the category of the psychotic, when we compare it with the definition Rudolf Otto gave for the qualities inherent in the supreme religious experience, namely that of the divine as the holy and numinous.

Pahnke describes, as one of the symptoms for psychotic experiences, the feeling of fear. Otto has defined the experience of the holy expressedly as including elements of fear, of awe, of dread, of the uncanny and of that debilitating, panic-stricken state of awareness of the daimonic powers of the deity which literally leads to paralysis of the body.<sup>26</sup> Might then not, we could ask, those symptoms which are associated with the category "psychotic" in fact be part of the experience we would in Otto's terms call "religious"?

A stronger doubt as to whether western subjects under the influence of psychedelic substances can have religious experiences was voiced by Masters and Houston: "...we are certainly less exuberant than some other researchers when it comes to the question of the frequency of such (religious) experiences." And they add: "The difference... is one of criteria rather than of testimonial opulence".<sup>27</sup> The difficulty is one of semantics, of social context and of presuppositions based on abstractions.

As Masters and Houston point out: "...a subject may have a euphoria-inducing experience of empathy with a chair, a painting, a person, or a shoe. This may result in protestations of transcendental delight as chair, painting, person, and shoe are raised to platonic forms and the subject assumes himself to be mystically enlightened. Too often in these and similar situations the guide will offer reassurance to the subject and so reinforce his belief that he is having a religious experience."<sup>28</sup>

These few examples of the almost unmanageable amount of literature on testing of psychedelic experiences may suffice to make my point clear: as long as we operate in the dimension of descriptive categories of testimonies under guidance, two criteria cannot be eliminated: one is the possible misinterpretation by the pre-conditioned guide (psychologist, experimenter etc.) and the other, and main problem, is the impossibility of real "control" over the experience, as long as we are not sure whether the subject and the experimenter share the same universe of meaning and motivation and as long as the guide (experimenter) cannot "re-live" the same experience. We are left with the problem of the intersubjectivity of experience and the transferability of forms of perception which is a general stumbling block for any social interpretation of the meaning of objects as well as of the meaning of the self as objectified personality vis-a-vis other individuals and the world outside.

On the purely descriptive level of interpretation a solution to the Durkheimian dilemma seems impossible. Let us take an example from art-appreciation: it is patently fallacious to suggest that the tree I see in



a natural surrounding and the tree I paint have the same meaning. Likewise, does the tree painted by Cezanne or van Gogh affect me in the same way as it did them? This depends not only on the idiosyncratic state of my cognitive-emotional setting as well as that of the painter, that is on the contextual criterium, but also on the intentionality with which I see the object in question.<sup>29</sup>

#### ANALYTIC DEFINITIONS OF ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS

From the above described materials it may seem that the overriding emphasis in most test-publications is related to the question of the different forms of reality perception under the influence of psychedelics. A considerable amount of literature, however, especially from comparative ethnography, concerns the question of the adequacy of categories applied to a range of similar phenomena, as for instance possession states, states of ecstasy, shamanism, trance, visions and other. These and other states of individual non-ordinary forms of awareness are not only, and not primarily, reached through chemico-botanical agents, but also through a great variety of forms of psycho-mental and somatic manipulation, as for instance fasting, meditation, breathing exercises and many others.

Most of the comparative ethnographic literature in this field is still concerned with the purely classificatory exercise of such activities, with the concomitant intractability of the problems due to the application of purely analytical concepts imposed upon descriptive material. Depending on the inclination and theoretical bias of the author, interpretations of the data oscillate widely. Some rather misleading exaggerations appear about the primacy of several forms of manipulation as does the obsolete evolutionary debate on the "origins" of religion.

Nevertheless, the analytic debate has shed some new light on an old question. The main debate was kindled by the re-interpretation of the ethnographic data on the phenomenon of "shamanism" in the publications of Wasson.<sup>30</sup> Wasson first pointed out that the ten prevailing interpretation of shamanism in its original area of Siberian tribal groups was full of erroneous and selective interpretation of the relevant literature. He found ample evidence that shamans in fact took psychedelic agents for their ecstatic "trips" to the upper and lower worlds. This in itself, and allied research on mushroom ingestion among Central American tribal groups, has thrown much light on the distribution of these practices and on the role of the shaman as prototype of the ecstatic psychopompos. But Wasson's claim that all religious beliefs and sentiments can finally be derived from the effects of mushrooms, is as misleading and unproductive as the opposite assumption held by Eliade that drug-induced states of ecstasy are only a "degeneration" of the original features of shamanism.<sup>31</sup>

In the field of comparative studies several other attempts at defining these many different phenomena in an analytic and operationally useful

category have been undertaken. The most comprehensive definition of "Altered States of Consciousness" (ASC's) was introduced by Ludwig.<sup>32</sup> Clearly influenced by the classical works of descriptions of non-ordinary experiences by Bucke (1901), James (1902) and Huxley (1954),<sup>33</sup> Ludwig defined ASC's as mental states differing from alert, waking consciousness. He incorporates several forms of induction of such ASC's through physiological, psychological, or pharmacological manoeuvres or agents and arrives at his categorization of ASC's as results of "reduction or increase of exteroceptive stimulation"; in this definition Ludwig combined the whole range of attempts at describing forms of sensory "overloading" or "deprivation" of earlier literature.<sup>34</sup> A different approach was that of Erika Bourignon<sup>35</sup> who separated naturalistic and supernaturalistic explanations for behavioural manifestations of trance, of possession and of related phenomena according to native explanations.<sup>36</sup> Bourignon believes that the literature gives us clear-cut examples of naturalistic or supernatural explanations for trance states by native informants. She then divides the different trance states into those involving concepts of possession and those which do not involve such an explanation.<sup>37</sup> Though the attempt to differentiate these intricate phenomena is both laudable and scholarly, it should have been clear to Bourignon that she is—even with the heuristic device of using native interpretations—really only playing with "ideal types". To make this point clear, one only needs to peruse the extensive ethnographic evidence on shamanism in Siberia: the shamans reported to a number of researchers that they become sick around puberty, that during this bouts of sickness a spirit appears, ordering the boy to become a novice with a mature shaman. During their later self-induced trance states, in which they either encounter the supernatural agent in a sexual and spiritual union or go into the lower worlds to fetch the souls of "sick" persons back, they are no longer "possessed" but, on the contrary, were in "control" of the spirit-world.<sup>38</sup> In Bourignon's categories reporting of sickness would then be "natural", the possession by the calling spirit "supernatural", the immature shaman would be "possessed", the mature shaman would be in control and induce the possession-like state? This shows, sufficiently, I believe, that the purely analytic categorisation of an activity or of the activities of one particular religious role which has to be seen as a holistic unit, can only lead to an "estrangement" from the living reality of such activities.

Another analytical approach is that of I.M. Lewis<sup>39</sup> who goes beyond semantic issues and tries to develop a "sociology of ecstasy" by relating different forms of ecstatic behaviour to the socio-cultural settings. He differs from Eliade in this attempt insofar as he does not include any historical perspectives. Eliade states once: ". . . even the most elevated religious expression (mystical ecstasy). . . presents itself through specific structures and cultural expressions which are historically conditioned".<sup>40</sup> Lewis relates, in a very Durkheimian tradition of English social anthropology, the possible social functions of ecstatic states to phenomena

of different forms of inadequacies of roles or individuals in a particular socio-cultural system (deprived women or suppressed groups become visionaries and display ecstatic behaviour), or he correlates his so-called "morality-cults" with those ecstatic forms whose function is the maintenance of the existing social order. I do not want to quibble with Lewis about the usefulness of this approach, but I do insist that he has with all the other mentioned analytic constructs in common the deficiency of not taking into account the "experiential" dimension. Yet, in one respect Lewis transcends the traditional socio-cultural explanatory models which search merely for the functional correlation of social activities, by rejecting the traditionally strongly supported hypothesis that ecstatic states are comparable to pathogenic states.<sup>41</sup>

### CULTURAL VERSUS PSYCHIATRIC MODELS OF EXPLANATION

Lewis opposed the claims of Bogoras (1907), Devereux (1956), and Krader (1954) among many others,<sup>42</sup> that shamans are "insane". With this he refutes in toto the application of diagnostic terminologies derived from western clinical psychology and traditional psychiatry. Insisting on the genuinely psychotherapeutic function of the shaman, Lewis interprets the disease phenomena positively as culturally conditioned ordeals of initiation which in most cases lead to controlled states of possession. He is here in agreement with a host of other authors as for instance Eliade, Shirokogoroff, Veith<sup>43</sup> and in particular with Nadel. Nadel had long ago pointed out that native societies make a perfectly clear distinction between real sickness and divinely inspired possessions.<sup>44</sup>

It is of interest here to note that in the field of psychiatry itself we find a rising opposition to the application of terms like "schizophrenia" etc., that is, to the application of traditional medical terminologies to states of "deviance" from the "normal". This opposition is most clearly stated by Laing and Szasz who argue that, depending on the frame of reference, the doctor might be considered the sick one from the patient's viewpoint.<sup>45</sup> However, the main implication from the comparative studies on shamanism has, as far as I can discern from the literature, not yet entered the main-stream of the so-called "anti-psychiatric" movement: if I understand their aims correctly, they are trying to locate (in a rather Neo-Marxist fashion) the disease and its etiology not in the individual, but rather in the social conditions surrounding the individual. In other words they consider the society as sick.

The really important inference to be drawn from the Siberian studies is that the shaman is definitely a curer who operates with the principle of putting himself into a like state of sickness as his patient whose soul he tries to bring back. Put differently, we might say that in order to cure, the healer makes himself sick to understand the etiology of the disease. The relevance of this healing-principle to modern psychotherapy would be to get rid of the age-old adage that the doctor should not "infect"

himself with the disease and that he should not get "involved" in the mental and psychological turmoil of his patient. In positive terms this means that the modern psychotherapist has to become involved and follow the maze-ways of the non-ordinary mind to be able to bring it back to this level of reality here and now. He has to try to play the role of the "psychopompos", the leader of the soul, the "hermetic" guide.

What surprises me, however, is that so many "transcultural psychiatrists" understand cultural variables and in particular the variability of the boundaries between genuine disease and inspired forms of behaviour. Many anthropologists on the other hand who are supposed to be well versed in cultural variability insist on seeing "sickness" in possession states. As Lewis said with appropriate indignation: "It is surely bizarre in the extreme to assess mental health in terms of the incidence of syndromes in the healers rather than in their patients."<sup>46</sup> Here are some examples of such invidious argumentation: Wallace uses the word "schizoid" to describe the shaman's identity reconstitution.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere he states "whereas the rituals of possession are directed toward hysteria, and the shamanic toward schizophrenia, the rituals of mysticism are focused on depression".<sup>48</sup> An impressive vocabulary indeed, but how meaningful is this transferring of western clinical terminology to people who live literally "world's apart"? Another misplaced application, based purely on speculation and embellished with psychiatric terminology, is given by Schwartz who recently stated that cargo-cults, and cults in general for that matter, are in part manifestations of a "paranoid ethos" which he thinks has permeated human behaviour since prehistoric times.<sup>49</sup>

I am in sympathy with the general trend of erasing the artificial boundaries between the different subfields of the social sciences, but certain analogies are not only misleading, they are downright dangerous in their implications; the carrying over of western psychiatric terminology into behavioural forms which are by native participants conceived as "religious" activities is nothing but a new form of a colonial and imperialistic mentality.<sup>50</sup> I think a discussion of this unwarranted application of preconceived disease descriptions does not even merit further comment.

Yet, a more subtle form of the argument has been introduced by the social philosopher Topitsch.<sup>51</sup> He indicated that the condition of intoxication through psychotropic agents as well as the rise of messianic movements with their expectation for immediate, this-worldly salvation have one criterium in common, namely they are mechanisms of escape from the existing reality. Topitsch has gone so far as to call this escapism a form of "alienation", by which he seems to mean a withdrawal from the existence in the day to day activities.<sup>52</sup> I think this is a rather dubious proposition. If we can reduce "alienation" to purely social conditions, then sociology is all we need to solve the problem. This would, as Petrovic has pointed out, leave no place for a philosophical anthropology. If alienation is not understood as a complex of social

conditions, but as an immanent part of man's existence through his being conscious and able to reflect, objectify and internalize (a proposition which is shared by very divergent philosophical movements, from Christian theology to Max Scheler,<sup>53</sup> from Karl Marx to Psychoanalysis), then it should have occurred to Topitsch to ask why all these efforts to reach an "altered state of consciousness" might be exactly contrary to his imputation. That is, these are not symptoms of a sick form (in Bleuler's psychological terms which Topitsch is relying on)<sup>54</sup> of alienation, but are rather an attempt to "overcome" this alienation which seems to haunt man in his waking consciousness where he is always "split off" from his objects, from himself and from his own objectified consciousness. The only way Topitsch could possibly have argued logically would have been to say that, until other evidence is forthcoming, the self-induced and sought after "altered states of consciousness" are but an extension of the "normal" forms of alienation.

### THE CENTRAL ETHNOGRAPHIC PARADIGM AND ITS RESULTS

Before discussing the central ethnographic paradigm I would like to summarize the main points established in the previous discussion. *First*, the founders of sociology were aware of the fact that there are indeed "experiences" beyond the ordinary world-perception. However, the sociologists and anthropologists with their Durkheimian or Weberian restrictions were not able to approach the level of "consciousness" and its contents per se, since they were bound by the dictum of socially manifested and perceivable activities based on symbolic representations. *Second*, the purely analytic attempts of comparing different mechanisms with which man has tried to achieve "altered states of consciousness" have done not much more than to prove to us the widespread usage of psychedelic substances and other forms of psycho-somatic manipulations of the mind. These analytic re-appraisals of the already known literature and of known activities have rectified certain misinterpretations for activities such as shamanism or medieval witch-craft. *Third*, the clinical psychological attempts of testing the content of experiences in drug-induced states have not been able to prove to us that a religious experience does not in fact take place. *Fourth*, one positive point has emerged from the renewed discussion of cross-culturally evident practices to reach different states of consciousness; the application of derogatory terms of "deviance" to activities of a different order has been eliminated from the psychiatric vocabulary.

The only way open to the researcher to approach the experiential qualities of another person or group seems to be through the application of a method which consciously searches out those experiential dimensions and tries to "relive" them. It is this method which has been for quite some time what I would label the *central paradigm of ethnography*.<sup>55</sup> With the method of *participant observation* most ethnographers are confronted

with a "different reality" than the traditional sociologist: the sociologist operates in a field of social relations, activities and values of which he himself is part and about which he has therefore a "precognition" acquired through his own socialization-process; the same would apply to the western psychologist and psychiatrist. In other words, the traditional sociologist is at a disadvantage in regard to his research object: he knows it too well, he is part of it, and he cannot see the "non-obviousness" of things which appear "obvious" to him.

By contrast, the anthropologist in field-work is confronted with a more favourable and at the same time also more difficult situation. More favourable, because the "differences" of a foreign culture stick more clearly out. More difficult because in order to understand the foreign, alien universe of meaning, its symbols and their expression in social life, the field-worker is caught in the dialectic which Simmel so clearly pointed out for the situation of the "stranger". The ethnographer has, as Alfred Schutz<sup>57</sup> once said, to learn to walk and talk again as if he were a baby. The anthropologist as field-worker has taken up as his main methodological premise what Dilthey and others required from the historian and Weber by the category of "Verstehen" from the sociologist. All ethnographers subscribe to the definition by Eliade for the historian of religion: "...he is forced in his hermeneutical endeavour to 'relive' a multitude of existential situations. . . (he). . . cannot say. . . that he has understood the Australian religions if he has not understood the Australian's mode of being in the world".<sup>58</sup>

Yet, there exists an important difference between the sciences of history and sociology and that of ethnography: whereas historians and other humanists as well as sociologists have either a pre-knowledge about the "object" or are only irritated by the problem of the communicability of the individual process of "reliving", the ethnographer encounters this dialectical antinomie in his day-to-day living in the alien culture. The ethnographer is not only, if he is worth his salt, intellectually involved with this problem, but he is often forced to live with it; it becomes an "existential" condition for the often dreary process of what is euphemistically circumscribed as "data-collecting". This requires the mental ability constantly to change from involvement to reflection. I once put the ethnographer's dilemma thus: "The observer qua participant has to step out of his "Lebenswelt" in order to understand, live in and record the world of the observed subjects ("the native"), and this observing and recording has to be done in terms of the observed culture or person, without the researcher being or becoming really native himself."<sup>59</sup> It goes without saying that his particular stance is in itself a value-orientation, but no more so than any other form of problem solving; as I pointed out above, whether I profess to be a positivist, an empirio-criticist, a critical rationalist or a New-Marxist, I commit myself a priori to a stance for or gainst the rational enterprise of science itself to include

or to exclude the study of certain phenomena and to choose the appropriate methodology. As Max Weber once said: "(From this) it does not follow that the cultural sciences too can only lead to results that are subjective in the sense that they are valid for one person, but not for the second. What changes is more the degree of interest in them by one or another person. In other words: what will be object of research. . . is determined by the values that rule a researcher and his time".<sup>60</sup>

The choice the anthropologist as fieldworker has made is basically one of using the "hermeneutical" method. As the word implies it is a method of "interpretation", "guidance", "Verstehen"—the interpretation of and the guidance through the maze-ways of a strange and different perception of the world as it is shared by members of another society. One of the preconditions for this is the process of a "relearning", which implies that the ethnographer qua participant has to try to forget his own conditioning and that when he reports he has to suspend his judgement. This is the famous stance of "*epoche*" which the classical schools of scepticism advocated.<sup>61</sup> The word "*epoche*" connotes "holding to oneself", "to abstain", "to keep to oneself". As Kant formulated it in cogent clarity: "Voluntarily to preserve one's self in *suspension judicii*, is testimony to a great intellect, and it is so extremely difficult, because preferences tend to meddle immediately with the judgement of reason".<sup>62</sup>

However, I do not conceive of hermeneutical methodology as an antithesis to empirical research methods. The sceptical stance of the ethnographer implies the achieving of an "*equilibrium between ethnocentrism and alienation, by balancing the mind between passion and epoche*", as I said in another place.<sup>63</sup> Kant already saw that the sceptical attitude which is not without that passion inevitable in any participation and internalization does not imply the abandoning of rational goals. He insisted that scepticism represents the foundation as well as the aim of the application of the faculty of reason. This means for Kant that reason itself requires an awareness of its own metaphysical notions which should not be taken too seriously. And this, according to Kant, can only be achieved when we take experience as the measuring rod for knowledge.<sup>64</sup>

It is therefore only to be expected that anthropologists with their insistence on the importance of "participant observation" as their main tool of the trade would also venture into the realm of experiential states of a religious nature as supremely embodied in the shaman's form, whose role is sanctioned and acknowledged by the collectivity as being endowed with non-ordinary knowledge.

The question remains: can there be a bridge between culturally and personally mediated forms of non-ordinary experiences or have we to give up this endeavour as fruitless because we would only commit the mistake of lifting certain facts out of their social setting?<sup>65</sup> The only sound way to achieve this in my opinion is by a twofold operation: to combine the phenomenological "art" of "bracketing" (Husserl) with the hermeneutical procedure of transmitting the experience. Bracketing implies here the

suspension of one's own judgement on the experience itself, and the hermeneutical approach entails the retelling of the experience without distortion from the standpoint of "distance".

This done, one would then need to re-introduce the culturally specific variable to find out in what way the personal experience (*Erlebnis*) surpasses the specific socio-cultural restraints and whether we can in the empirical sciences ultimately try to support the notion of a "psychic unity of mankind" (Bastian, C.G. Jung) or at least of the content of certain "role-experiences" (of the shaman, the sorcerer, the psychopompos, the mystic). The least result we could hope for would be an insight into the potential of man's capacity experientially to find a foundation of his-being-in-the-world in the analytically proposed or dogmatically asserted "sacredness" of his self and the world he lives in.

It is with these reservations and far-reaching implications for the epistemology of any comparative science of man that we should try to understand the approach of those younger anthropologists who participate in the experiences of people who consciously enter a "different reality" through the taking of psychotropic substances. As Michael J. Herner pointed out: "Undoubtedly one of the major reasons that anthropologists for so long underestimated the importance of hallucinogenic substances in shamanism and religious experience was that very few had partaken themselves of the native psychotropic materials (other than peyote) or had undergone the resulting subjective experience, so critical, perhaps paradoxically, to an empirical understanding of their meaning to the peoples they studied".<sup>66</sup>

It would be beyond the purpose of this essay to comment on the manifold different results which have come from the diverse studies on primarily South American cultures. The basic points which become clear seem to be that the taking of psychotropic substances occurs regularly and the whole communities share the experience together. In most communities the "experience of the different reality", the world of the "spirits", the encounter with the "divine" is taken as the "real world". All studies bear out that the individual who feels in tune with the cosmic forces, has a strongly expressed belief of a communion with the spiritual world. Further general conclusions can be drawn from various reports as to the content of the experience, the social setting and the interaction between the community and the shaman who acts as guide and counsellor in the shared experience.<sup>67</sup>

Firstly, the purpose of entering into the "separate reality" of the spirits seems to be culture-specific. In some instances the aim is to heal a sick individual, to find the source of the disease, to identify the object or person causing the illness and to neutralize the evil agent. In other instances the shaman is expected to alleviate symptoms which cause anxiety to a whole community, to identify and neutralize or to battle with forces in the "other reality". In these cases the shaman seems to play the role of coalescing the community feeling to provide security and to



reiterate the continuity of the society's existence. The threatening forces are often perceived as being sent from the real of the "beyond" in a double sense: the beyond is not only the other reality, the abode of spiritual forces, it is also the evil from *beyond the boundaries* of the special social group, from the "enemy". Here the entering of the spirit world by all members of the community leads to an assertion of the basically "ethnocentric" world-view of each ethnic group.

Both aims, the removal of an individual evil and of identifying the source of threat towards the community tell us something important about the shaman's position: the shaman is of a different order in the social and spiritual hierarchy because he controls the individual and the community. People believe in his extraordinary powers to control the spiritual world and therefore he is not only the psychopompos for the individual but is also the pointer for communal action. Whether the shaman can be considered a kind of native "psychoanalyst" remains a controversy in the literature.<sup>68</sup> Dobkin de Rios pointed out that what is in classical Freudian terminology referred to as the transference between patient and curer does not occur in the case of *ayahuasceros* in the Peruvian slum communities.<sup>69</sup>

The main difference between the two processes has been hinted at by several writers on the subject,<sup>70</sup> but all of them seem to agree that the shaman is the one who *speaks*, whereas the psychoanalyst is the one who *listens*. As Munn reported from participation in the "mushroom experience" among the Mazatecs: "At times it is as if one were being told what to say, for the words leap to mind, one after another, of themselves without having to be searched for: a phenomenon similar to the automatic dictation of the surrealists. . ." <sup>71</sup> Munn describes in detail the poetic and oratorical skills displayed by shamans in session.

The important question which arises here has to do not only with the role of the transference of symbolic meaning, but rather with the manipulation of language: *Who manipulates what?* As Munn reports, the utterances of the shaman are done in a form which suggests that he is not really the one who speaks. All invocations end with the epithet "says"; like, "there is the terror, says".<sup>72</sup> Munn comments: "the words with which he (the shaman) states what his work is indicate a creative activity neither outside of the realm of reason or out of contact with reality. . . Reality reveals itself through him in words as if it has found a voice to utter itself."<sup>73</sup>

This reveals to us indeed a very important dimension of the shaman's powers and abilities which puts him into the category outside that of the western psychoanalyst and nearer to the western view of a poet. As Heidegger expressed it on several occasions: "Man only speaks when he re-presents language. Language speaks."<sup>74</sup> The poet is the one who uses language in a particular way, or, to stay with Heidegger's idiom, through the poet the language speaks in a particular way to us: language condenses reality (the German verbal infinitive *dichten*, meaning "to create poetry",

is connected by Heidegger with the infinitive *verdichten*, which means "to condense something".<sup>75</sup>

However, as long as the western psychoanalytic techniques do not become forms of "speaking" on the side of the "guide", a comparison of the two roles seems not yet timely. As Jacques Lacan, the pioneer of the combination of structural linguistics with psychoanalysis, says: "... how could a psychoanalyst of today not realize that his realm of truth is in fact the word, when his whole experience must find in the word alone its instrument, its framework, its material, and even the static of its uncertainties."<sup>76</sup>

At first sight, it appears as if the general conclusion we are able to draw from a comparison of the ethnographic literature on "altered states of consciousness" under the application of psychotropic agents, with researchers as participants, does not surpass the traditional framework of sociological interpretations of religious experiences. Structures and functions of psychedelic sessions seem to be context-oriented, boxed into culturally specific categories. Sifting through the reports on the contents of the experiences of South American Indians under the influence of yage, Harner comes to the preliminary conclusion that even the similarities in the images seem to be attributable to the regularities of the tropical rain forest environment which provides the natural basis for the culturally symbolized world of the native's mind.<sup>77</sup> Moreover the role of the shaman seems to be one of coping with the exigencies of the situation at hand (curing, divining, healing individuals or enhancing the general communal sense against the hostile outside world.)

Yet, I think, these studies show certain implications for the understanding of the category of the religious in general, and for the role of the shaman in particular, which surpass the ordinary sociological and anthropological interpretations. *Firstly*, I would suggest that instead of purely concrete socio-cultural acts, as for instance certain rituals, as the foundation for individual and social cohesion, many societies conceive the ultimate existential grounding of individual and collective "health" in the personal encounter with the numinous forces of the world beyond the reaches of the waking consciousness.

*Secondly*, the "other reality" is not an illusory one, but is "real" in the sense of being endowed with powers that can be tapped and communicated with, to a degree, by everybody and that have an effect on ordinary life. Instead of talking about God, the participant speaks with Him.<sup>78</sup> The idea of the unity of man with his natural surrounding, and of his oneness with the inanimate world as well as with the "supernatural" and with his self, leads to a disappearance of the dichotomy *nature/culture* as well as that of *natural/supernatural*. The feeling of the convergence of "coincidence of opposites" is not illusory and cannot arbitrarily be designated by us as hallucinatory. As Munn says "To call such transcendental experiences of light, vision, and speech hallucinatory is to deny that they are the revelations of reality".<sup>79</sup>

Yet, we might say that there exists a hierarchy of power. Not everybody can manipulate the divine forces of the "other reality". This implies, *thirdly*, that shamans are more than mere conjurers, tricksters, "primitive" healers, who respond to the needs of the individual or the community. He is a vessel for the universal powers, he guides the member of the community through the perils of the beyond, he is in particular a person who has mytho-poetic qualities; he forms myth, he creates the words, he speaks, he opens the communication channels to the divine, or, in other words: the divine speaks through him, through his language, and the divinity reveals itself to him and through him in language. I cannot agree with van der Leeuw who says: "The mystic is distinguished from primitive man. . . (by his ability) not only to transform everything from the outside to the inside, but also to make everything inner into "objectified things".<sup>80</sup> On the contrary, I would say that the native, in the role of the shaman, is the *mystic par excellence*. The shaman has the ability of the artist to show to others that the "things in themselves" do mean something "other" (for Heidegger an art work is always "allegorical" in its aim, from the Greek "allogoreúei").<sup>81</sup> The shaman does not only create his and the community's reality by naming it through language and by closing the gap between the "harsh reality" of daily troubles through reference to and introduction into the "real" world of the divine; he also has to "see" before he can speak, as the mystic "sees with closed eyes" (the meaning of the Greek word "myein"). The individual who can heal the "alienation" of other members of the community has to possess the power of "seeing" the possibility of a reconciliation between aspiration and reality and has then to make visible for others the oneness of man and cosmos, of culture and nature.

Is there a way to penetrate this form of world-perception, to get an empathetic understanding of the method of "seeing" as achieved by the shaman, and to transmit this mode of perception to the reader through participant observation?

#### THE HERMENEUTIC GUIDANCE INTO THE MIND OF A SORCERER

The finest attempt at describing the mental world of a native shaman (a *Yaqui* "brujo") comes so far from Carlos Castaneda's ethnographic work.<sup>82</sup> Castaneda was for many years the disciple of a brujo and tried to "relive" how the "sorcerer" experiences and orders the "other reality". Castaneda describes step by step how the *quest for power* (seeing) is undertaken by a *man of knowledge* (sorcerer) and how the brujo constructs, orders, maintains and controls the universe of those powerful spiritual entities with which the cosmos is filled. The importance of Castaneda's descriptions lies not primarily in reports on the intricacies of the spiritual geography of a sorcerer, but in the method of transmitting this personal and individual quest and the "experience of the separate reality" of the sorcerer through the device of a description of his own,

Castaneda's, experience of that reality. Castaneda describes his own approach in the following words which have a definite ring of Husserl's method of phenomenological "bracketing": "Obviously. . .any event that occurred within this alien system of sensible interpretation could be explained or understood only in terms of the units of meaning proper to that system. This work is, therefore, a reportage and should be read as a reportage. The system I recorded was incomprehensible to me, thus the pretense to anything other than reporting about it would be misleading and impertinent".<sup>83</sup>

Castaneda brackets competently insofar as he does not make many comments we would expect in an ordinary ethnography; there are no indications as to the social frame of reference, the cultural milieu or the role of the brujo in his own society. Yet, Castaneda cannot completely exclude all personal interpretations. By both describing his own experiences and discussing these then with the sorcerer, by asking the sorcerer whether he has "seen" the right or expected or the same things as the sorcerer, and by additionally relating the often puzzling and paradoxical answers of the sorcerers, Castaneda lets the reader be the third party in a multi-dimensional game of feed-back processes.

The sorcerer's *paradoxical* answers to "rational" questions (to "validate" experience!) have incidentally a strong resemblance to the puzzles of the mystics of other areas and times (in particular to some Taoist and Zen statements). This dialogue between the "rational" researcher and the "nonsense speaking" sorcerer, whereby the latter nevertheless finally succeeds with his techniques in "conditioning" Castaneda to "see" himself, holds for the reader a dazzling fascination of the contradictions between *illusion* and *reality*. For instance, when Castaneda encounters his "guardina" to the gates of knowledge in the form of a giant and asks the sorcerer how to elicit the help of this "giant" guardian, the sorcerer answers that what Castaneda perceived to be a giant was really a grasshopper.<sup>84</sup>

Castaneda's *phenomenological* and *hermeneutical* reports could certainly be used by a traditional "theory-builder" to "invent" the elaborate universe of the brujo's structure of the "separate reality" for so-called "scientific" purposes. Yet, it is here that the sorcerer himself destroys our illusion (and Castaneda's) that we can completely relate to or transmit the experience of the other reality of an altered state of consciousness, saying: "You really know how to talk and say nothing, don't you? . . .I have told you, you have to have an unbending intent in order to become a man of knowledge. But you seem to have an unbending intent to confuse yourself with riddles. You insist on explaining everything as if the whole world were composed of things that can be explained. Now you are confronted with the guardian and with the problem of moving by using your will. Has it ever occurred to you that only a few things in this world can be explained your way. . .?"<sup>85</sup>

That implies that neither Castaneda nor we as readers can really

“relive” the experience of the brujo by employing “our language”. Nevertheless, the degree to which this is possible through participant observation, is proved by Castaneda’s own attempt and his reporting about it. He himself was obviously successful (maybe otherwise we would have no report on it?) in a personal way, and the attempt itself is insofar validated in the eyes of the sorcerer, as the sorcerer himself took the researcher on not only as a disciple but actually guided him on the “trip” to achieve knowledge. The main value of Castaneda’s description would therefore lie in the validation of our belief in the anthropological method of “participant observation” and in the hermeneutical endeavour.

I think that there is at least one further important message in the reports of Castaneda which we should heed. It is the warning that not all methods or techniques to attain an “altered state of consciousness” are suited for everybody and certainly not everybody is able to attain “knowledge” in the sense of the mystical “seeing”. As the sorcerer indicates, the search for the powers of the separate reality is really more than a mere exercise in the *intellectual game of hermeneutical procedures: it is a game beyond words and one of life and death*. These are the words of the brujo to Castaneda (to us): “We are different, you and I. Our characters are not alike. Your nature is more violent than mine. . . My benefactor said that when a man embarks on the path of sorcery he becomes aware, in a gradual manner, that ordinary life has been forever left behind; that knowledge is indeed a frightening affair; that the means of the ordinary world are no longer a buffer for him; and that he must adopt a new way of life if he is going to survive. . . By the time knowledge becomes a frightening affair the man also realizes that death is the irreplaceable partner that sits next to him on the mat. Every bit of knowledge that becomes power has death as its central force. Death lends the ultimate touch, and whatever is touched by death indeed becomes power.”<sup>86</sup>

## CONCLUSION

I think we can draw several very general conclusions about the possibility of studying religious phenomena in the realm of “experiences” and about the potentially useful methods of how to go about it, from the previously presented materials. These conclusions have not only some importance for the problem at hand, namely the elucidation about the occurrence of altered states of consciousness, but are of value for the general problem of approaching and understanding human experience in a non-ordinary context (as which the scientific view of the world itself could be perceived).

*My first conclusion* concerns the problem of epistemology of the scientific enterprise itself. As Husserl once said: “Every experience is. . . not only characterized by the fact *that* it is consciousness, but it is simultaneously determined by the intentional object *whereof* it is a consciousness.”<sup>87</sup> As we saw, several early authors from William James onwards,

have tried to approach and explain the phenomenon of "religious experience". Yet, these forays have been ignored or even declared as non-admissible by the founders of the sociological tradition. Durkheim as well as Weber declared the category of the experiential as lying outside the realm of sociological enquiry proper. This commitment to a particular "paradigm" has in the words of Thomas Kuhn produced an apparent consensus from which a particular research tradition has continued.<sup>88</sup> However, as the many attempts at a re-interpretation of religious phenomena in the last decade seems to indicate, there exists a general dissatisfaction in the social sciences with the established traditional canons of interpretation.<sup>89</sup> But most approaches seem just to be more or less successful attempts at propping up the established paradigm. What was therefore needed, was the introduction of a new question, or in the words of Kuhn: ". . .since no paradigm ever solves all the problems it defines and since no two paradigms have all the same problems unsolved, paradigm debates always involve the question: "Which problems is it more significant to have solved?"<sup>90</sup> And as Kuhn quite correctly implies, this question can only be answered by criteria that lie outside the normal science altogether.

As I proposed above, the introduction of an important "outside" factor, admittedly as "irrational" as any such decision, is the question of the relevance and the content of "religious experience". The evidence I introduced proved that there is already a paradigm implicit in one branch of the social sciences which has been applied for some time to approach social reality from an experiential point of view: the paradigm of participant observation of the ethnographer. Using this particular view of reality and applying it to a specific problem, would therefore lead to see the familiar phenomenon in a "new gestalt", as Kuhn has termed it.<sup>91</sup> Instead of throwing out the problem of religious experience itself, it only needs an additional point of view how to approach it. With this I do not imply to throw out all the other paradigms; instead a combination of different methods developed and obtainable from different "paradigmatic" world-views might open the way to a wider understanding of the category of religious experience.

If I may use the language of the Yaqui sorcerer in a metaphorical sense: there are *many separate realities* of the category "religious experience". There exists one level which pertains to the individual, the non-reducible "idiosyncratic" experience of one particular person; the second level is that of the social framework and the culturally specified role of the person undergoing the experience; and third, there is the level of the whole of mankind, of man as bio-physical and natural entity. According to these—minimally abstracted—*three universes of reference*, the religious experience should therefore be approached with at least three different categories of method.

As to the *first universe of reference*, the individual one, I think that the approach of participant observation, which we considered as the basic

ethnographic paradigm, is the most useful tool. This method coincides with what has been called the hermeneutical perspective; this perspective considers *Verstehen* as the adequate form for the empathetic reliving of human actions from the inside. As with most paradigms, this one has often been vastly overrated. I do not share the ambitious declarations of Droysen<sup>92</sup> who considers hermeneutical understanding superior when compared with empirical forms of explanation. I certainly do not agree with Gadamer who wants hermeneutics to become the queen among methods and *the* supreme form for a philosophical world-interpretation.<sup>93</sup> However, I do not think that the biting criticism which Hans Albert applied to the whole hermeneutical field by labelling it the handmaiden of theology (in the normative-dogmatic sense),<sup>94</sup> is really called for. The acceptance of the ethnographic paradigm of participant observation by many other social sciences seems to indicate that, notwithstanding the controversy concerning the objectivity of this process, the hermeneutical approach can indeed contribute to a wider understanding of the category of the Experiential. Hermeneutics in combination with the phenomenological exercise of "bracketing" insures us that the intrusion of unwarranted evaluations of the experiential dimension is at least checked to the degree to which this possible intrusion is made overtly known and is reflected upon. As Karl Mannheim stated: "It is clear, . . . that every social science diagnosis is closely connected with the *evaluations and unconscious orientations of the observer* and that the *critical self-clarification* of the social sciences is intimately bound up with the *critical self-clarification* of our orientation in the everyday world."<sup>95</sup>

As to the *second universe of reference*, it seems clear that the different methods of the empirical social sciences are of great value in giving the subjective experience some basis to stand on, a frame of reference outside the inner dimension of the individual. Only after we have placed the idiosyncratic experience of a particular role like that of the shaman in its cultural and social milieu, can we even begin to look for cross-cultural similarities of role-experiences in order to approach the controversial questions of particular universal characteristics as to their function, structure and meaning (as for instance the search for archetypes etc.). This second frame of reference might at some level of analysis open the possibility to not only clarify but also to correlate two of the most controversial and nebulous concepts that pertain to all three universes of reference, namely those of the "collective representations" or collective consciousness (Durkheim) and of the "collective unconscious" (Jung). The combination of both techniques, of the experiential and of the intrinsically socio-cultural approach, have already led to a new perception of known phenomena. The reliving of altered states of consciousness and the hermeneutical description of such experiences through Castaneda have given rise to the re-evaluation of the shamanistic phenomenon and with it a rethinking of our own categories of psychomental diseases;

at the same time, the opinions held dear by many historians about the unfoundedness of experiences reported by people who were accused of witch-craft in medieval times have definitely and irreversibly been shattered.<sup>96</sup>

As to the *third level of reference*, I do not agree with the classical sociological paradigm that social facts can only adequately be explained by methods taken from the very social facts or from social actions observable in their concrete settings.<sup>97</sup> This is a logically circular argument; moreover, the maintenance of the demarcation lines between humanities (including the social sciences) and the natural sciences has become untenable. To understand fully the phenomenon of religious experience, and to find out that psychedelic substances of similar content can have any effect on the neuro-physiological system of the species man, the disciplines of ethnobotany, biochemistry, psychopharmacology and neuro-physiology have been of indispensable assistance.

Yet, there is no need to go so far as to reduce every individual or socially mediated activity of body or mind to bio-chemical, physical or environmental regularities. This has been and still is the basic programmatic stance taken by certain behaviourists in the United States as well as in Russia (if Skinner and Luria can be considered as representatives of these divergent streams of materialistic—reductionist point of view). Yet, we can no longer accept the opposite notion that man understands his own creations (society and history) better than he does nature, because man did indeed create his own socio-cultural as well as his psycho-mental activities, but did not have a hand in creating the natural universe. This was the challenge thrown into the face of those who tried to apply natural science methods to the universe of reference of the social and individual realms, the first time by the largely neglected Giambattista Vico.<sup>98</sup> I think a middle way between the opposites of purely cultural versus purely natural explanations of man's activities is offered by re-interpretations of Marx' writings by several so-called Neo-Marxists. As Petrovic has pointed out so clearly, Marx saw man as belonging to two realms at the same time: man is part of nature, yes; but man is also more than just a natural being, he is the being that can transcend the restrictions imposed by nature.<sup>99</sup> It is here that Marx comes nearest to the position taken by Max Scheler and the representatives of a philosophical anthropology as for instance Arnold Gehlen. To quote Scheler: "The spiritual being, then, is no longer subject to its drives and its environment. Instead, it is 'free from the environment', or, as we shall say, 'open to the world' ".<sup>100</sup>

*My second conclusion* is that comparative ethnographical research and the rational-critical analysis of such materials has shown, that a transference of specific techniques from one society to another is not always possible. In the case of altered states of consciousness and the category of religious experience of shamans the limitations of transference have clearly emerged. The *fears* expressed in parts of dogmatic theology,



which were at the same time the *hopes* of the "counter-culture", namely that psychedelics would open the way to "instant communion with the sacred cosmos" or even a domination over that "separate reality" (anticipated by the exaggerated claims of such writers as Alan Watts or Timothy Leary),<sup>101</sup> have proved overly optimistic, or pessimistic, respectively. As studies on shamanism have indicated, there are ways of communion with the spiritual world which are accessible to the collectivity; but as much as there exist power-hierarchies in the social world, so do we find power-hierarchies of controlled access to the spiritual reality. Not everybody is chosen to see, to speak and be blessed to become the vessel of the divine word, or to heal society and the individual by re-uniting man and nature.

As van Gennep originally showed, and recent studies by Turner support the evidence,<sup>102</sup> most native societies have very elaborate rituals of initiation; at each occasion of passing from one social status to the next (birth, puberty, marriage, death, etc., which are seen as dangerous points of transition) the person has to undergo an ordeal which is not only *symbolically* but is *actually dangerous*. Death is always potentially near. This is a particular point which seems to have been forgotten in western societies. Our initiation rituals have become symbolic occasions of decorated meaninglessness. The deadly dangers of initiation apply in particular to the entering of the "separate reality" of shaman. It is important to remind ourselves in this context of reports on the many "bad trips" under the influence of psychedelics. We could summarize this point by saying that there is no guarantee that the "divine" shall reveal itself to the non-initiated person; should someone, however, who is not adequately prepared, meet the "deity" in its dreadful aspects, mental psychic or somatic damage are possible alternatives.

*My third conclusion*, drawn from ethnographic and psychological data from non-industrialised tribal and from western and other industrialised societies, indicates the actuality, efficacy and reality of the search for altered states of consciousness. This is a blow to any theory about the ever-increasing secularization of the modern world. The search for "salvation" goes in diverse forms:

- psychotropic drugs and other techniques lead tribal groups and individual shamans to perceive the wholeness of the cosmos;
- Neo-Marxist and other social utopian thinkers expect the realm of freedom in a future society;
- modern messianic and pentecostal movements want the "paradise on earth";
- psychoanalytic methods of various description offer the re-assembling or healing of the lost or divided self.

Whichever method we use to interpret these various forms of a quest for something outside the ordinary experience, the choice is an irrational and individual one.

If this conclusion seems rather ambiguous and uncertain still, I would like to remind the reader of the virtues of Kolakowski's plea for non-dogmatic *inconsistency*: "Inconsistency is simply a secret awareness of the contradictions of this world".<sup>103</sup> It is up to us as scholars—on whichever quest we might be as private individuals—to elevate this awareness from a place of secrecy to a clear and conscious commitment.

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#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 See my article, 'Bewusstseinszustände und Stufen der Wirklichkeit, Eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme zur neueren Literatur auf dem Gebiete der Religions-soziologie', *Kölner Zeitschrift für Sociologie und Sozial-psychologie*, 24th year, (1972), No. 4: 821-835.
- 2 See for instance Theodor W. Adorno et al., *Der Positivismusstreit in der Deutschen Soziologie* (Berlin, 1970); Claus Grossner, *Der Verfall der Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1971); for Neo-Marxism see Gajo Petrovic, *Philosophie und Revolution* (Hamburg, 1971); and L. Kolakowski, *Toward a Marxist Humanism* (New York, 1968); for Critical Rationalism see Hans Albert, *Traktat über Kritische Vernunft* (Tübingen, 1969); for Hermeneutics see Hans Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode* (Tübingen, 1965); for Phenomenology see Alfred Schutz, *On phenomenology and social relations* (Chicago, 1970).
- 3 For the discussion and history of the controversial category of Verstehen see Ernst Topitsch, ed., *Logik der Sozialwissenschaften* (Köln a. Berlin, 1965).
- 4 Thomas Luckmann, *The Invisible Religion* (London, 1970); Peter L. Berger, *The Social Construction of Religion* (Middlesex, 1973); for the general points also Joachim Matthes, *Religion und Gesellschaft* (Hamburg, 1967).
- 5 Luckmann, *ibid.*, p. 26.
- 6 Clifford Geertz, 'Religion as a Cultural System', in Michael Banton, ed. *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion*, 2nd. ed. (London, 1969), pp. 1-40.
- 7 Weston LeBarre, *The Ghost Dance* (New York, 1970), p. 40.
- 8 A.F.C. Wallace, *Religion: An Anthropological View* (New York, 1966), p. 5.
- 9 E. Durkheim, 'De la définition des phénomènes religieux,' in *Annee Sociologique* 2 (1899); Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen 1920).
- 10 Wallace, p. 67; see also M. Harris, *The Nature of Cultural Things* (New York, 1964).
- 11 K.P. Koepping, 'Participant Observation', in *Occasional Papers in Anthropology* No. 1 (Brisbane 1973), pp. 31-67.
- 12 E. Evans-Pritchard, Introduction to Robert Hertz, *Death and The Right Hand*, trans. R. a. L. Needham (Aberdeen, 1969), p. 24.
- 13 Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion* (Chicago, 1944), 9th ed. 1962.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 17, footnote 3.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 383.
- 17 H.D. Lewis and Robert L. Slater, *The Study of Religions* (Middlesex, 1969), p. 144.
- 18 See L. Kolakowski, *Die Philosophie des Positivismus* (München, 1971), pp. 222-227.

- 19 Chuang Tzu, Writings, in W.T. de Bary, James Legge, B. Watson, eds., *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York, 1964), p. 140.
- 20 H. Osmond, 'A Review of the Clinical Effects of Psychotomimetic Agents', in *Annals of the New York Academy of Science* 66 (1957), pp. 418-434; see also Bernard S. Aaronson and Humphrey Osmond, eds., *Psychedelics* (New York, 1970), p. 9.
- 21 Don Wakefield, 'The Hallucinogens', in David Solomon, ed., *LSD: The Consciousness-Expanding Drug* (Berkeley, 1966), 6th ed. 1968, pp. 49-71.
- 22 Aaronson and Osmond, 1970; Solomon 1968; specifically Huston Smith, 'Do Drugs have religious impact', in Solomon 1968, pp. 155-169.
- 23 Walter N. Pahnke, *Drugs and Mysticism*, in Aaronson and Osmond, 1970, pp. 145-165.
- 24 R.E.L. Masters and Jean Houston, *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience*, (New York, 1966).
- 25 Pahnke, 1970, pp. 148-152.
- 26 Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige*, 10th ed. (Breslau, 1923), p. 14.
- 27 Masters and Houston, 1966, pp. 247-316, in particular p. 258.
- 28 Masters and Houston, p. 259.
- 29 Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* (1913, par. 36, quote in Alfred Schutz, *Phenomenology and Social Relations* (Chicago 1970), p. 58.
- 30 R.G. and V.P. Wasson, *Mushrooms, Russia, and History* (New York, 1957); R.G. Wasson, *Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality* (New York, 1969).
- 31 Mircea Eliade, *Le Chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase* (Paris, 1951).
- 32 Arnold M. Ludwig, 'Altered States of Consciousness' in C.T. Tart, Ed., *Altered States of Consciousness* (New York, 1966), pp. 9-22.
- 33 R.M. Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness* (New York, 1901); William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York, 1902); Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception* (New York, 1954).
- 34 Hans Seyle, *The Physiology and Pathology of Exposure to Stress* (Montreal 1950); Bruce L. Welch, *Psychophysiological Response to a Mean Level of Environmental Stimulation* (New York, 1964); D. Solomon, P.E. Kubszansky et al., eds., *Sensory Deprivation* (Cambridge, 1961).
- 35 Erika Bourignon, 'World Distribution and Patterns of Possession States' in Raymond Prince, ed., *Trance and Possession States* (Montreal, 1968), pp. 3-34.
- 36 Ibid., pp. 4-7.
- 37 Ibid., pp. 7-12.
- 38 M.A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia, A Study in Social Anthropology* (Oxford, 1914).
- 39 I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion* (London, 1971).
- 40 Mircea Eliade, Paris, 1951, p. 35.
- 41 I.M. Lewis, 1971, pp. 178-205.
- 42 Waldemar Bogoras, *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition, Vol. 2, The Chukchee* (Leiden, 1907); L. Krader, 'Buryat Religion and Society' in *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 10 (1954); G. Devereux, 'Normal and Abnormal', J.B. Casagrande and T. Gladwin, eds., *Some Uses of Anthropology* (Washington 1956).
- 43 Eliade, 1951; S.M. Shirokogoroff, *The Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* (London, 1935); I. Veith, *Hysteria* (Chicago, 1965).
- 44 S. Nadel, 'A Study of Shamanism in the Nuba Hills; in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 71 (1946).
- 45 R.D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (London 1965); Thomas S. Szasz, *The Myth of Mental Illness* (London, 1970).
- 46 I.M. Lewis, p. 185.

- 47 Wallace, p. 150.
- 48 Ibid., p. 152.
- 49 Theodore Schwartz, 'The Noise', in *Psychology Today* (March 1971), pp. 51 ff.
- 50 The full argument on this problem and its resulting attacks by newly independent tribal societies against the whole enterprise of western social sciences, in particular against anthropology, appears in two of my previous articles: a) 'Das Wagnis des Feldforschers', in K. Tauchmann, ed., *Festschrift zum 65. Geburtstag von Prof. Helmut Petri* (Köln 1973), pp. 258-270; b) 'Ethnographic collections and the "new identity" of native populations—an eristic argument for a humanistic anthropology', in *Occasional Papers in Anthropology*, No. 2 (Brisbane 1973) pp. 9-24. For a specific argument see V. Deloria, *Custer Died for your Sins—An Indian Manifesto* (London, 1969).
- 51 The following is a summary of two articles in German by E. Topitsch, translation and paraphrasing mine; a) Phylogenetische und emotionale Grundlagen menschlicher Weltauffassung, in W.E. Mühlmann a. E.W. Müller, eds., *Kultur-anthropologie* (Köln, 1966), pp. 50-79; b) 'Zur Entmythologisierung des Marxismus', in Ernst Topitsch, *Sozialphilosophie zwischen Ideologie und Wissenschaft* (Neuwied, 1966), pp. 297-327.
- 52 Topitsch, 1966 a, pp. 67-69.
- 53 See Max Scheler's writings.
- 54 E. Bleuler, *Lehrbuch der Psychiatrie* (Berlin, 1955), p. 39.
- 55 See K.P. Koepping, 'Participant Observation. . .', 1973 a, pp. 31-67; a) discussion can be found in J.B. Casagrande, ed., *In the company of man* (New York, 1964); R.D. Manners and D. Kaplan, 'Notes on theory and non-theory in anthropology', in Manners and Kaplan, eds., *Theory in Anthropology* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 1-12; for the field of sociology see G. Jacobs, ed., *The participant observer* (New York, 1970), and as a typical case-study based on this method E. Liebow, *Tally's Corner* (Boston, 1967).
- 56 G. Simmel, 'Der Fremde', in M. Landmann, ed., Simmel, *Das Individuelle Gesetz* (Frankfurt, 1968) pp. 63-70; originally as G. Simmel, *Die Formen der Vergesellschaftung* (Liepzig, 1908).
- 57 Schutz, 1970.
- 58 Mircea Eliade, *The Quest* (Chicago, 1969), p. 10.
- 59 Koepping, 1973 a, p. 33, slightly amended.
- 60 Max Weber, Die Objektivität sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnisse', in Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre* (Tübingen 1920), p. 23. f., translation mine.
- 61 See K.P. Koepping, 'From the Dilemma of the Ethnographer to the Idea of Humanitas', in *Occasional Papers in Anthropology*, No. 4 (1975), pp. 124-136; For the sceptical tradition I am relying on Max Pohlenz, *Die Stoa* (Göttingen, 1948), the works of Montaigne and the sources of Walter Kranz, *Vorsokratische Denker* (Berlin, 1939), among others.
- 62 Cited in Kant 1792 'Vorlesungen über Logik', in Kowalewski, ed., *Die philosophischen Hauptvorlesungen Immanuel Kants* (Königsberg, 1924), p. 445.
- 63 Koepping, 1973 a, p. 52.
- 64 Immanuel Kant, 1764 'Inquiry into the clarity of precepts of natural theology and morals', cited from F. Kaulbach, ed., *Immanuel Kant* (Berlin, 1969), p. 99 ff., my rendering from the German.
- 65 See the comments by E. Evans-Pritchard on McLennan or Frazer, 1960, p. 14.
- 66 Michael J. Harner, Ed., *Hallucinogens and Shamanism* (London, 1973), p. XI.
- 67 These sections are a summary of the following articles: K.M. Kensinger, 'Banisteriopsis Usage Among the Peruvian Cashinahua', in M.J. Harner, ed.,

- Hallucinogens and Shamanism* (London, 1973), pp. 9-14; M.J. Harner, 'The Sound of Rushing Water', in Harner, pp. 15-27; Marlene Dobkin de Rios, 'Using Ayahuasca in an Urban Slum', in Harner, pp. 67-85.
- 68 Lévi-Strauss appears the first to have kindled the controversy in his *Structural Anthropology* (New York, 1967), p. 195.
- 69 Marlene Dobkin de Rios, *Visionary Vine* (San Francisco, 1972), in particular pp. 138-140.
- 70 Henry Munn, 'The Mushrooms of Language', in Harner, 1973, pp. 86-122.
- 71 H. Munn, p. 88.
- 72 Munn, p. 106.
- 73 Munn, p. 114.
- 74 Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen, 1960), p. 32. ff.
- 75 Heidegger, p. 159 ff; the problem of the meaning and structure of language has been taken up by the field of Semiology; see for instance Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (Frogmore, 1973), in particular pp. 117 ff; the attempt to elucidate problems of knowledge with reference to the social sciences, by using Castaneda as ethnographic example and combining it with the results of Semiology has been introduced by David Silverman, *Reading Castaneda—A Prologue to the Social Sciences* (London, 1975); see also Munn, 1973, who uses comparisons between shamanistic speaking and the French surrealist literature.
- 76 Jacques Lacan, 'The Insistence of the letter in the Unconscious', in Jacques Ehrmann, ed., *Structuralism* (New York, 1970), pp. 101-137, p. 103.
- 77 M.J. Harner, 'Common Themes in South American Yage Experiences', in Harner, 1973, pp. 155-175.
- 78 This metaphor appears in James S. Slotkin, 'The Peyote Way' in *Tomorrow* 4 (1955), pp. 64-70.
- 79 Munn, p. 122.
- 80 G. van der Leeuw, *Phänomenologie der Religion* (Tübingen, 1956), p. 562. my rendering from the German text.
- 81 See Martin Heidegger, *Holzwege* (Frankfurt, 1950).
- 82 Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan* (New York, 1969); the summary relies mainly on the second volume of the trilogy: Carlos Castaneda, *A Separate Reality* (New York, 1971).
- 83 Castaneda, p. 25.
- 84 Castaneda, p. 152 f.
- 85 Castaneda, p. 154.
- 86 Castaneda, 1971, p. 182.
- 87 See Schutz, 1970, p. 58, citing from Husserl, par. 36; emphasis by Schutz.
- 88 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, 1968), p. 10.
- 89 The above cited works of Luckmann and Berger respectively can be understood in this light.
- 90 Kuhn, p. 109.
- 91 Kuhn, p. 11.
- 92 Johan Gustav Droysen, *Historik*, 4th ed. (München, 1960), p. 26.
- 93 See Grossner, p. 56-58, and Gadamer in Grossner, p. 219 ff.
- 94 Albert, p. 143 ff.
- 95 Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia* (New York, 1971), p. 45; emphasis mine.
- 96 See M.J. Harner, pp. 125-150; initially the re-evaluation of the phenomenon seems to go back to the publication of Julio C. Baroja, *The World of the Witches*, 2nd ed. (Chicago, 1968).
- 97 This Durkheimian bias is strongly shown in a remark by Peter L. Berger, 1973, p. 181 where he lapses into the following platitudinous apology: "Questions raised by sociological theory must be answered in terms falling within the

- latter's universe and discourse". The question raised by my proposals remains: Who decides what falls into the realm of which science?
- 98 Giambattista Vico, *Scienza Nuova*, 1725 a. 1744, German ed. transl. by E. Auerback (Hamburg, 1966); a re-discovery of Vico's great contribution to the humanities has been initiated by Benedetto Croce and has been followed up in the writings of Karl Loewith, Max Horkheimer, and most recently of Isaiah Berlin.
- 99 See Petrovic, 1971, p. 33; Karl Marx, *Texte zu Methode und Praxis 2* (Hamburg, 1966), p. 117 and 118.
- 100 Max Scheler, *Man's Place in Nature*, 1928, transl. by Hans Meyerhoff, 2nd ed. (New York, 1968), p. 37.
- 101 See among others Alan Watts, *The Joyous Cosmology* (New York, 1962); T. Leary, *The Politics of Ecstasy* (New York, 1968); Aldous Huxley could be added to this list of "gurus" of the counter-culture; only these productions seem to fall short of the mythopoetic qualities of Baudelaire or Nerval for instance, and certainly don't reach the clarity as well as depth of the succinct sayings of the shamans and mystics themselves.
- 102 See Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 4th ed. (Chicago, 1966); among the many ethnographic volumes of Victor W. Turner the easiest introduction for the non-anthropologist seems to be his *The Ritual Process* (Middlesex, 1974) where he also tries a metaphorical application of the concept of "liminality" to modern societies, as does Mircea Eliade in his various books.
- 103 Leszek Kolakowski, *Toward a Marxist Humanism* (New York, 1968) p. 214.