

RELIGIOUS STATES, THE MIND, AND DRUGS

(with particular attention to Peyotism)

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Annotated Bibliography

Bernard, M. 1963. "God in a flower pot." *American Scholar* 32: 578-86.

Bernard's basic orientation is that of a folklorist and reference is made to some peyote folktales. But in this paper she deals mostly with religious experience gained from the use of peyote by Wyoming Indians. Of interest was her suggestion that a new discipline should be started in a field she termed theo-botany. She also suggests that drugs started the human belief in an after life because she thinks that new ideas are the result of new experiences.

Bharati, Aghananda. 1971. "Anthropological approaches to the study of religion: ritual and belief systems." *Biennial Review of Anthropology* 1971.

I found this article to be of great utility in assessing both where the study of religion has been and where it is going. Bharati gives his own opinions and interpretations of the major approaches to the study of religion. I found myself agreeing with his views almost in every detail. Also of importance in this article was his treatment of specific belief systems in the framework of a more general approach. Bharati touched many of the areas in which I have much interest. This article is quite good as a starting point for researching many areas in the field of religion, among them is the topic of this bibliography.

Collins, J. J. 1968. "A descriptive introduction to the Taos peyote ceremony." *Ethnology* 7: 427-49.

This article has the best systematic description of a peyote ceremony that I was able to find. Collins goes into great detail in his description. I believe I have been greatly influenced by this article in my own descriptive techniques. Collins divides all ceremony activity into two categories: 1) ceremonial specifics, which are the material paraphernalia, ideological paraphernalia, human paraphernalia, supernatural paraphernalia, and mythological paraphernalia; 2) ceremonial structure, which consists of preparation, major activity, and terminal activity. This article not only sharpens one's descriptive technique, but it also gives a comprehensive description of the peyote ceremony.

Castanada, Carlos. 1968. *The teachings of Don Juan: a Yaqui way of knowledge*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

----- 1971. *A separate reality: further conversations with Don Juan*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

----- 1972. *Journey to Ixtlan: the lessons of Don Juan*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

These books deal with drugs and belief systems. Beginning with

the first book to the last the emphasis moves from drug experience to beliefs and somewhere along the way the two become indistinguishable. Castanada is attempting to say that culture gives different meaning and emphasis to the experiences that people can have. I myself have not had the opportunity to "see" the world through the "eyes" of another culture, but I feel that Castanada has come the closest to allowing me to do so. The style that Castanada uses to write is so totally different from most anthropologists that he does not create the impression of being authoritative as do many anthropologists. Castanada attempts to communicate the world of Don Juan (truly a separate reality) by use of the metaphor. After reading Castanada's books one begins to question everything one sees because if Castanada has given an accurate interpretation of the world of Don Juan, then our world must seem just as strange and unbelievable to Don Juan as his world is to us. After reading the three books (but especially Journey to Ixtlan) the world that we perceive in this culture seems more arbitrary than ever.

"Drugs and narcotics; illusions and realities." 1969. Senior Scholastic 94: 5-10.

The title of this article is very misleading. I did not feel it dealt with illusions and realities at all, except by stating that reality lies with the person who does not use drugs. I found the opinion of this author to be biased and close-minded. I did not think that this article was worth reading.

Freilicher, L. 1972. "Story behind the book: Carlos Castanada trilogy." Publisher's Weekly 202: 50-1.

The article very briefly summarizes what Carlos Castanada wrote in his three books. One interesting part in the article is about a telephone call the author had with Castanada in which she asks him about an experience he had in a forest (described in "A Separate Reality"). Once when Castanada was in the forest (and not using drugs) with Don Juan, he was instructed to wait in the bush. He felt annoyed and ridiculous but his senses were suddenly jolted by an explosion and small explosions all around him engulfing him. A huge bird flapped its wings above his head, and countless other birds brushed their wings against him as an army of rats ran across his body. The perception ceased allowing a moment's rest when a huge furry paw touched his neck. He screamed and collapsed in tears where he fell asleep until morning. When asked about this perception he said that he could not dismiss it because he knew what he perceived, but he also said he couldn't explain it in terms of accepted logic.

Houston, J. 1965. "Psycho-chemistry and the religious consciousness." International Philosophy Quarterly 5: 397-413.

A great article that explains religious experiences through changes in the chemistry of the brain. Houston says that through the ages man has subjected his body to many rigors (i. e. fasting, flagellation, sensory deprivation, and eating vegetable substances which contain drugs) and it was the result of these rigors that gave rise originally to religious beliefs. Houston notes that when the body is subjected to certain rigors that changes in the brain's chemistry results in the altering of the consciousness of the individual experiencing the rigors.

This article was well worth reading and has many ideas that value deeper research, but I found many of Houston's interpretations to be very Jungian. He tries to relate anatomical evolution to an evolution of the psyche.

Howard, J. H. 1956. "Oto-Omaha peyote ritual." *Southwest Journal of Anthropology* 12: 432-6.

A good description of the peyote ceremony (complete with diagrams) and a particularly good attempt at explanation of the components of the ceremony and its beliefs.

La Barre, Weston. 1960. "Twenty years of peyote studies." *Current Anthropology* 1: 45-60.

A pretty dry account of the history of peyotism. But it does give the main disputes between scholars and issues such as legal status, psychiatrics in a historical perspective. In addition it gives an exhaustive bibliography of writings about peyote from 1938 to 1959. Necessary reading for anyone interested in peyotism.

Margolis, J. 1969. "Transformation of the self and the duplication of ceremonial structure." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 10: 302-7.

A philosophical discussion about real existence and perceived existence. Margolis believes that the question of whether something really exists or perceptually exists is not an empirical question. Margolis believes that every perception is real. After reading this article I was struck by the way in which this discussion applied to the difficulties that arise from cultures dividing the world into arbitrary categories of their perception, believing their own interpretation to be real and anything else, false. Well worth rereading.

McCrackin, S. 1971. "Drugs of habit and drugs of belief." *Commentary* 51: 43-52.

This article is strictly about drugs from our own culture's viewpoint. But it is interesting in the way that McCracken categorizes drugs. He categorizes drugs in a functional way. He says that some drugs make you more human (coffee, tea, alcohol, tranquilizers, and barbituates) and other drugs make you more than human (marijuana, the opiates, the stimulants, and the hallucinogens). The only other interesting feature was that it pointed out the hypocrisy of this culture's definition of legal and illegal drugs.

Opler, Morris E. 1939. "A description of a Tonkawa peyote meeting held in 1902." *American Anthropologist* 41: 433-39.

A very vivid account of a peyote ceremony. In particular this account is interesting because it is in the informant's own words and the informant was not a member of the peyote cult. The account tells of the informant's difficulty in obtaining entrance into the ritual tent, even though he himself was an Indian. In addition the informant relates quite well the reactions of other people who took part in the ceremony, as well as himself, to the drug and to the beliefs.

Osmond, H. 1961. "That night in the tepi." 20th Century 170: 38-50.

This is a first hand account by a white man of his experiences with the effects of the drug peyote during the course of a contemporary peyote ceremony of the Native American Church of Canada. Although this article is preoccupied with the effects of the drug, the frustrations and persecution felt by the members of the Native American Church is very sincerely portrayed. The author had much empathy with the natives who took part in the ceremony and he says that their religion developed from their agony of losing their hunting grounds at the end of the 19th century.

Smith, H. 1964. "Do drugs have religious import?" Journal of Philosophy 61: 517-30.

Smith believes that drugs throw a light on the history of religion, phenomenology of religion, philosophy of religion, and the practice of religious life itself. He says that through trial and error ancient man discovered that he could alter his state of consciousness through actions or eating plant food containing drugs. Smith believes that the connection between drugs and religion is very strong. He gives archaeological and historical evidence supporting his belief that drugs have, in some cases, actually initiated some religious perspectives. I agree with Smith quite a bit and think that his evidence is sound. However, I think that before one can say that religious experience stems from chemical changes in the brain, that we must do much more research into man's chemistry and particularly his psychology.

Spicer, E. H. 1969. "Review of Carlos Castaneda, Don Juan." American Anthropologist 71: 320-22.

Gives a critique of Castaneda's book (The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge) from an anthropological viewpoint. Before an anthropologist reads Castaneda's books it would be a good idea to read this review. Spicer points out Castaneda's strengths and weaknesses.

Spiro, M. E. 1953. "Ghosts: an anthropological inquiry into learning and perception." Journal of Abnormal Psychology 48: 376-82.

Spiro breaks down why the people of Ifluk believe in ghosts into psychological terms. He seems to have kind of a Freudian way of explaining why these people believe in ghosts, but his main purpose is to show that these people believe in ghosts not because of their minds work different than ours but because they work the same. Spiro successfully dispels the notion that our belief system is better than another.