

FROM A LECTURE BY



Persephone. Another example that should be mentioned are the *incubi* and *succubi* of medieval mythology. These were male and female spirits which were thought to come to people in the night and have intercourse with them. This was thought to be very bad for health, and general wasting away diseases were often explained by invoking this phenomenon.

I want to talk about something similar, but with a uniquely modern cast. The flying saucer phenomenon has begun to take on a new character—an erotic dimension. There is no hint of this kind of thing in the early literature, meaning from 1947 through 1960. But now it seems to be a rising theme. I am interested in it because, though it is the darling of a

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Close Encounters
of the Fourth Kind
— the X-rated
kind

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Forced into
Sex Aboard
a Flying
Saucer

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What is the
Result? A
New Breed of
Humanoids?

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...The
Darling of a
Screwball
Fringe...

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This evening's conversation is called *Alien Love*, and it might have been called *Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind*—the X-rated kind. I don't know how many of you read journals like *The National Enquirer*, but this mentality is reflected in an advertisement which appeared in that publication. It says, "FORCED INTO SEX ABOARD A FLYING SAUCER, WHAT IS THE RESULT—A NEW RACE OF HUMANOIDS?" The article goes on to say that for \$10.95 a vanity press will send you a self-published book that will further explore this. This is not the only book that has recently dealt with this subject.

The idea of sexual relationships between human and non-human beings is a persistent sub-theme occurring throughout much of mythology. Ralph Metzner reminded me that in the Old Testament it says, "...and the gods found the daughters of man fair." The Persephone myth is a good example of this, where the Plutonic demiurge of the underworld ensnared

screwball fringe, I think it represents an interesting developing folkway from which we can learn.

It's only in the last sixty years, since the discovery of DNA and the discovery of the Hertzspring-Russell diagram, that we have begun to get an idea of the true size and complexity of the Universe. Until then, the notion of extra-terrestrial life and extra-terrestrial intelligence could not even be coherently framed. Before that time, humanity's relationships with transhuman intelligence tended to occur with those categories of beings which occupied hierarchical levels above and below us in the structure of being—demonic or angelic. These beings were all terrestrial in some sense. But science, by clarifying the non-uniqueness of biology and giving us an idea of what's going on in the galaxy and beyond, has validated the notion that life is ubiquitous and that intelligence is a property which accompanies life and is also, therefore, common in the Universe. This legitimizes fantasy about the existence of extra-terrestrial life. In the last half of the twentieth century the mythological outlines of what the alien must be are now being cast; the expectations of people living now who have been given rudimentary knowledge of biology and astronomy allow the alien to be conceived. Their expectations are casting the extra-terrestrial archetype into a mold that will hold until it is confirmed or denied by true extra-terrestrial contact, whatever that means. In other words, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

We now know enough to fantasize realistically about what the alien would be like, and this sets up polarities in the collective psyche that previously we have only seen at the level of the individual. What the developing archetype of the extra-terrestrial "other" means, and is the source of our fascination with it, is that, collectively, for the first time we are beginning to yearn. This new collective yearning is what is happening in religion on a very broad scale. The previous concerns of salvation and redemption are shifting into the background for the great majority of

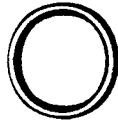
people and, what is driving religious feeling is a wish for contact—a relationship to The Other. The alien then falls into place in that role; the alien fulfills it. I believe that if religion survives into the long centuries of the future, this is what will be its compelling concern: an attempt to define a collective relationship with The Other that assuages our yearning and our feeling of being cast out or, as Heidigger says, "cast into matter, alone in the Universe."

It is as though by passing into the psychedelic phase—the space-faring phase—the entire species is passing into adolescence and becoming aware of the possibility of something like a sexual completion with an Other, with an intelligent, non-human species. This is an idea which had previously been masked for us in our collective prepubescence, where we were self-absorbed. Freudians call this the polymorphically perverse phase, meaning occupied in the exploration of the ego

historical impact of some sort, and I think this is it: we are actually positioned to attempt something which has never been attempted before, to open a dialogue (as a collectivity) with the Other and to use that synergy to bootstrap ourselves to a new cultural level. This potential is now hidden in the psyche. There isn't a great deal of talk about it; it only arises at this totally screwball folkloric level. None of the managerial or analytical elements in this society are looking at this at the moment. But I think it is forming and crystallizing. I think that the peculiar animate quality of psilocybin is probably a major catalyst for this.

In my opinion contact with extra-terrestrials and voices in the head and Logos-like phenomena are not a part of the general mythology of LSD. Certain exceedingly intense individuals on a combination of hashish, methedrine, and LSD may achieve this intermittently, but it is not something which is attached to the notion of what LSD does. With

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and the body. The present culture crisis, which is talked about in many different ways but never this way, also has this dimension: there exists a psychological, erotic drive for a connection with the Other.

To sum up what I've said about religion, it is as though the Father-God notion were being replaced by the peer-alien notion — androgynous, hermaphroditic, transhuman; it is all these things which the unconscious chooses to project upon it until we have more information to define what it might actually be.

We are now in the pubescent stage of forming an image of the thing desired, and the image of this yearning will eventually cause that thing to come into being. The appetite for fusion is what is propelling the historical process toward an apocalyptic transformation. It isn't recognized as that in the culture yet, but it is this fascination with the Other which propels us forward. But it is not an inevitability. In other words, this could slip away from us. It is a potential which has swum near to the historical continuum and, if it is invoked by enough people, it will become a fact. But it could also slip away. We could harden; there are fascist, hypertechnological futures that we could sail toward and realize that would eliminate this possibility of opening to the Other.

Still, for the moment, man's cultural direction is being touched by this notion of alien love and it comes, I think, through the rebirth of the use of plant hallucinogens, because they seem to be the carriers of this pervasive intellect which speaks and which can present itself in this particular way. What is the historical importance of psychedelics? We know that shamans have used these things for millennia and have plumbed these depths as individuals. I always have the intuition that there was a



PHOTO FROM THE VANISHING SHADOW

T E R E N C E M C K E N N A

psilocybin, on the other hand, it definitely is. Our survey showed that as people's doses increased, their susceptibility to this phenomenon increased markedly. I think the issue of contact with the extra-terrestrial for a large number of people has been broached by that phenomenon. It's very puzzling to people because our expectations are always that we are cells in a vast societal animal and that the news of anything truly important will be conveyed electronically to us. That if flying saucers land, the President and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, or *somebody*, will convey the word to us. But the challenge of psychedelics is to realize that the potential for the alchemical wedding with the alien, though it is a collective phenomenon, is inherently tribal. It will happen as an experience for individuals at the individual level.

People in the confines of their own apartments are becoming Magellans of the interior world, reaching out to this alien thing, beginning to map it and bring back stories that can only be compared to the kind of stories that the chroniclers of the New World brought back to Spain at the close of the fifteenth century: Cities of gold, insect gods, spaceships of vast extent, tremendous wealth, endless wastelands; we're just beginning to map this area. Many times I've spoken of it as a landscape and many times I've spoken of it as a confidante—a kind of Girl Friday who tells you things. But another facet of it is the erotic element. It inspires a feeling of opening and merging that is, in our cultural conditioning, what we associate with love. To distinguish it from ordinary love I always think of it as "luv." It's the kind of love that you get with the alien. What it means is that the relationship to the alien can be thought of as modeled on the microrelationships to the Other that each of us form through relating to other people.

The *Conunctio* is a useful notion here; this is where two people get together and try to function as alchemical mirrors for each other. Tantra and Taoist sexual practices, all these things have to do with fusing into dyads. What is happening in that situation is that each party to the fact is taking on the quality of the other. In a non-erotic context that's called becoming what you behold. We are uniquely susceptible to becoming what we behold. This is why we have always been led into the future by the nose by our imaginations — because we dream and then realize the dreams. This fact about our monkeyhood, when put in combination with a relationship with an alien mind, means that we will become what we behold. This is what I think is happening. The curious intimation of the deepening contact with the Other makes it seem probable to me that we *are* in love, but we're just slowly realizing it because we've never been in love before. So articulating this kind of stuff, one person saying it to another and discussing it, is actually an attempt to conjure this into being—to call it forth and make this supposition become fact. Because all facts are the suppositions of very large numbers of people, and this archetype now hangs in the balance. There is much tension about the flying saucer, aside from the erotic connotation, because the flying saucer represents a tremendous challenge to science, perhaps the ultimate challenge to it. It may be as confounding to science as the resurrection of Christ was to Greek empiricism and Roman imperialism. In other words, the flying saucer is definitely an agent of cultural change. On the level of the machine, it bids distress for our most cherished explanatory schema, but on the level of the alien as flesh, it presents a much more basic and fundamental challenge, because the erotic complex is being redefined by this phenomenon.

I was talking with someone about how many people take LSD and how it's very difficult to get precise numbers on this matter because people don't talk about it. Yet in the last fifteen years sexual researchers have had a field day because people are very, very willing to discuss their bizarre sexual peculiarities and to pour out their hearts to people with clipboards. So we now know a great deal about human sexuality and this suggests that the taboo is moving. The taboo is moving so that as we become more sexually polymorphic and open with each other and less ego-identified with our sexuality, we become very private and con-

strained, secretive and religious about our psychic experiences, particularly the psychedelic experiences. He was suggesting this to me as an explanation for why it is so hard to get people to describe their drug experiences—why the literature is so barren of any richness of description when the experience is the culmination of richness and intricacy and beauty. Though I don't take this idea as gospel, I think it's very interesting. We are much more open with each other sexually and in our process of examining our libidinal consciences in the confines of our own mind but the taboo has now moved to this interior world where we have this adolescent sensitivity about this developing relationship to The Other.

Now all these things are elements which are going together to make the emerging human future, and it is a human future that is proceeding exponentially. It is not a mere linear propagation of the present, because these peculiar factors are impinging on it. Things like psychedelic substances, the ability to erect large structures in deep space, the presence of the alien Logos in the mind of the collectivity, the presence of the cybernetic network that is developing—all these things are going toward the release of man into the imagination. So far, the cultural engineers have not stressed enough that the erotic element be included in the engineering of the human future.

Eric Jantsch was a good friend. Many of you may know his books; he and I used to argue about space colonies and whether this was a viable way to go. He sensed this problem by saying to me, "But Terence, where will they get nature spirits? How will they induce nature spirits to inhabit the space colonies?" Another way of saying it—a way that brings it much closer to home—is how can Eros be invoked in space, carried with us, and expanded?

I tried to do my part to help this process along by spreading the rumor that the Soviet lady cosmonauts sustained five forty-minute orgasms in weightlessness and that they were sitting on this information because they didn't want panic. Maybe it's true; I'll say it's true. When the monkeys find out what sex in zero gravity is like, I won't have to make hard pitches like this one.

Let me sum up by saying that there is an emerging *Zeigeist* of hyperspace. I call it a *Zeigeist* of hyperspace because as man leaves the earth, another dimension is added and that crude metaphor will reverberate at every cultural level because we will begin to live in a hyperdimensional collectivity, not only of earth and space, but of information of past and future, of conscious and unconscious. This will come about by navigating between these places on psychedelic substances. And, eventually, the technological culmination of this is the projection of human consciousness into whatever form it seeks to take. And the *Zeigeist* of hyperspace which is emerging, which is heavily freighted with technology and cybernetics, requires that it be consciously tuned to an erotic ideal. As I said before, it is important to articulate the presence of this erotic ideal of the Other early, in order that this process not go sour or slip away and leave us with one of the barren futures that some kind of very flat behaviorist or Marxist analysis of history could leave us with. This is a chance, an opportunity to fall in love with The Other and elope to the stars; but it's only an opportunity and not evolutionarily necessary. In other words, if we only live with the ideal of the Other and never find and fuse with The Other, we can still evolve along whatever pathways lie ahead of us. But if the opportunity is seized, if we take seriously the experience of the last ten millennia and complete the modern program of realizing the ideals of the archaic, (recognizing that what the twentieth century really is about is an effort to establish and perfect the ideals of late Paleolithic shamanism) then we will have integrity in relating to this opportunity and we will have a very peculiar historical adventure...which I cheer for.

Once we set ourselves the task of describing the psychedelic experience, it will become more accessible, because if we each gave our best metaphor and then all used that metaphor, and used it to produce a better metaphor, we eventually would retool our language so that we would be

WORKS MENTIONED

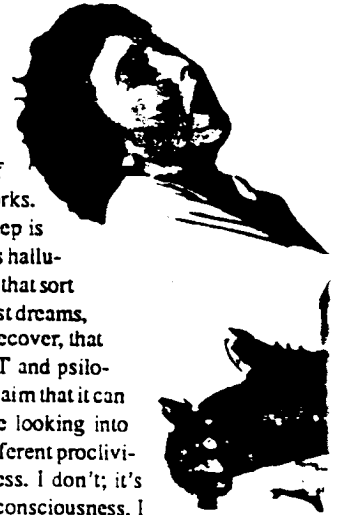
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Photo from
The Alligator People

able to handle these modalities. This will happen. Historically, the psychedelic experience is a new object for the Western languages. It will be very interesting to see what English, the language of Milton, Chaucer and Shakespeare, will be able to do with the psychedelic experience. In William Blake one gets the feeling that English could do staggering things with the psychedelic experience. There are places in Andrew Marvell ... but all this remains to be done. The relationship of the psychedelic experience to literature is a whole field unto itself; there are certain moments where great literature has passed near it. Flaubert's *Temptation of St. Anthony* touches it, very succinctly. J. K. Huysman's *Against the Grain* is an amazing novel about an aesthete, a man who is so sensitized to perception that he can't leave his apartments. He has his walls covered in felt and he keeps the lights very low. He collects Redon when nobody had ever heard of Redon. He buys turtles and has jewels affixed to their backs. Then he sits in a half-lit room and smokes hashish and watches the turtles crawl around on his Persian rugs. Let's all go home and do this.

I think dreaming and states of psychedelic intoxication, possibly the afterdeath state, possibly the post-apocalypse state for the collectivity, are all related to each other. Certainly dreaming is the natural access point because it's a part of one's experience every day. But these places are what is called state-bounded. It's very hard to bring

back information and one needs to have a natural inclination or technique. It doesn't matter whether one uses plants or yoga or dream-manipulation. It's a matter of exploring the mind by whatever means works. Studies show that in the deepest part of sleep is the high point of production of endogenous hallucinogens in the human brain, like DMT and that sort of thing. Nevertheless, it's only in the wildest dreams, which are necessarily the most difficult to recover, that one passes into places which are like DMT and psilocybin intoxication states. Yoga makes the claim that it can deliver one into these spaces. I spent time looking into that—not a lot of time—but people have different proclivities for these altered states of consciousness. I don't; it's very hard to move me off the base-line of consciousness. I am very stolid and set in the here and now. So hallucinogens work better than anything for me. I scoured India and could not convince myself that it wasn't a shell game of some sort or that it was as real as the states manipulated by the various schools of New Age psychotherapy and that sort of thing. But in the Amazon and other places where the use of plant hallucinogens is understood one is conveyed



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into worlds that are appallingly different from ordinary reality. Their vividness cannot be stressed enough. They are more real than real. And that's something which one senses intuitively. They establish an ontological priority. Once you get that under your belt and let it rattle around in your mind, then the compasses of your life begin to spin and you realize that you are not looking in on it; it's looking in on you. This is a tremendous challenge to the intellectual structures that have carried us so far the last thousand years. We can do tricks with atoms; there's no question about that. But these tricks immolate us.

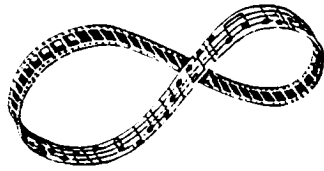
Higher order structure molecules, let alone organelles and that kind of thing, are *terra incognita* to us; we have no notion of how these things work or what is going on. Yet it is from those levels that the constituent modalities of reality are being laid down. One can understand all this fine nuclear chemistry about the atom, but where does it put one? The story we tell ourselves about how the world works can't explain to us how forming the wish to close your open hand into a fist makes it happen. This is the status

of present science. They cannot even offer a clue about how that happens. The chemistry of muscle contraction is understood. It's the initiating phenomenon; what is it that decides "I will close my hand"? They know as much about that, perhaps less than, Western philosophy knew in the twelfth century. And it is at the level of the body experience and the mind experience, that we operate. You can live in the social and religious atmosphere of Hellenistic Greece and offer sacrifice to Demeter, or you can live in twentieth century America and watch the evening news, but you can have no faith that you are getting the true story on reality. These are just historical contexts that can only be transcended by the acquisition of gnosis—of knowledge that is experienced as true. It's hard for people to even realize what I am talking about because they believe that something like logical consistency is how the efficacy of an idea is judged. Actually, this is what led us into this extremely alienated state. We haven't demanded that the stories we tell ourselves about how the world works confirm our direct experience of how it works. And the psychedelic substances, by focussing attention on the mind/body/brain interactions, are reframing these questions. And not a moment too soon, because the cybernetic and technical capabilities of this society demand that this all be looked at very clearly or we're going to sail off the moral edge of things and into the abyss.

ON LOCATION

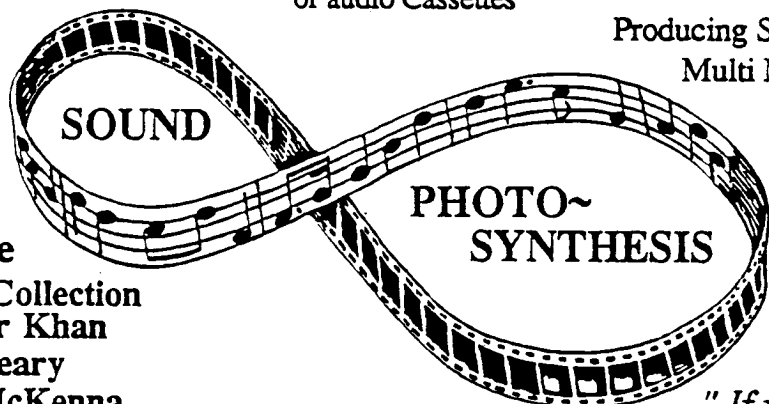
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