THE PSYCHEDELIC REVIEW

and sure as is the present intentional parturitional behavior of the mother who practices "childbirth without fear."

Into this frame of reference we can fit, as a culminating procedure and in terms of total life-acceptance, this skilled modernization of the Bardo Thödol. Here in The Psychedelic Experience is the crowning efficacious rite whereby, after the physical, racial, threedimensional life has been fulfilled, we go on to that specific psychological growth which raises us to the goal that alone makes sense of Life, that brings us those powers and freedoms, to attain which we took a human body and lived the strenuous preparatory 75 years as an embryonic psyche.

BOOKS RECEIVED


Mondragón, Sergio, & Randall, Margaret, eds.: el corno emplumado/the plumed horn. a magazine from Mexico City. No. 13, January 1965. Apartado Postal 13-546, México 13, D.F. Single copy, $1. Four issues, $3.00 ($7.00 pesos).


BOOK REVIEWS

THE PEYOTE CULT


Of all the hallucinogens, peyote — the small, innocuous-looking spineless cactus, Lophophora Williamsii — has attracted probably the most widespread attention, and this over a relatively long period of time. The bibliography concerning peyote and its chemical constituents covers many fields and is staggeringly extensive. Known since the days of the Spanish subjugation of Mexico, peyote increasingly seems everyday to be claiming the attention of serious scientific investigators.

Twenty-seven years ago, Weston La Barre published his Ph.D. thesis in anthropology at Yale University. It appeared as No. 19 of the Yale University Publications in Anthropology. The volume quickly became accepted as the authoritative work on the peyote cult, but only a few years after publication it was unavailable. Another anthropological La Barre's treatment succeeded — it is generally agreed — in presenting what we might term an interdisciplinary approach. He reviewed much of the botany and ethnobotany, chemistry and pharmacology basic to a solid understanding of peyote itself and, in turn, of the native religious cult that had grown up around it. This, combined with his meticulous field work, gave La Barre's treatment a singularly sympathetic and objective character that one finds too often wanting in sumptuous studies that are otherwise sound and superbly executed. What stands as fact is simply this: La Barre's The Peyote Cult is still quite generally considered to be the outstanding work on peyote. It is not often that any monograph in such a fast-moving field can hold a position of primacy for a quarter of a century. Consequently, I refrain here from being ludicrous enough to present a "review" of so well known and tested a document.

As we all rejoice in having the original again easily available, we are still more grateful that this new, enlarged edition has two appendices, bringing peyote studies up to date in an astonishingly masterful way. The second part of this new edition, entitled "Twenty Years of Peyote Studies" (taking us from 1938 to 1958), was first published as No. 1 in Vol. 1 of Current Anthropologist in 1960. In addition to a bibliography of some 163 titles, mainly ethnological, La Barre presents a clear picture of the increasing political persecution of the American Indians' rights to free exercise of the peyote religious cult. He likewise gives illuminating insights into the direction of psychiatric and psychological research concerning peyote and mescaline in this period.

The third and perhaps most significant part of the new edition is "The Last Five Years of Peyote Studies." Totaling 37 pages, it is divided into sections on ethnography, problems of acculturation and diffusion, the Native American Church, mescalism, mescaline and its experimental uses, peyote as a "narcotic," peyote and the law, the secularization of peyote, chemical mysticism and an academic debacle.