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separate reality

by ken dye

BOOK REVIEW

back. One of the interesting things one views around the country is the interest in Eastern religions. If I may talk on the level of anthropology, and socialogy; perhaps, what we are seeing due to technology and particularly media, is an invasion of a dying Western value system by the Eastern perspective. My guest is that the Eastern perspective is dying too; it is trying to relate to Western values because the East has been deprived of the Western technology and rationality. Whereas, the Western values are dying for lack of feeling, affection, and sensuality. If you hold this view, how do you define sin?

I believe sin is running away or rejecting your own fundamental humanity, coping out rejecting your own deepest self by letting others define you rather than defining yourself to some degree. You are kind of floating along on what everybody else expects of you. And you cannot do that and remain human. This is what I've learned from Black history. You must not let anybody else define who you are. You have to enter into your own self definition. You have to interact with others.

It has been put forth that some of the once rebellious youth are claiming an acceptance of Christ and using Him as a way to re-embrace their parent's safe middle class values without loosing face. Its part of the one-upmanship game. So ingrained in our prestige bound society. What is your response to that view?

Are you saying that we need each other? That's exactly what's happening. Right, we need each other. The East has to incorporate the Western Experience into its psyche and the West has to integrate the Eastern experience into its psyche. Someone said "The East is the unconscious of the West." And you can turn it

said "The East is the unconscious of the West," And you can turn it around and say the West is the unconscious of the East. And to be fully human is to be aware of our conscious and our unconscious behavior. What I am learning in Black Studies is that I think we Whites have got to submit to the discipline of learning from the Black experience as a way of helping to get ourselves together. I am willing to say, after my reading of Black history, American history and the history of Blacks in America, that the Black community is the unconscious of the White community and the White community is the unconscious of the Black community. community.

I guess all I am saying is that my whole vocation and all my training is theology are coming to fruition because the dimensions of the crisis upon us are spiritual.

By the time a student reaches college he is able to contruct abstract theories of reality which transœnd his everyday experience. He will for instance be prefectly content with atoms and electrons and the fact that the chair on the other side of the room is constructed mostly of

that the chair on the other side of the room is constructed mostly of space. When he sits down however the notion looses meaning. Each of us, no matter how great our intellect or understanding, operates on the basis of empirical observations and in our heart of hearts these observations are what we believe. In The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge Carlos Castaneda reconstructs reality along abstract lines from his conversations with a Yaqui Indian named Don Juan. In His Second book, A Separate Reality: Further Conversations With Don Juan, he goes much further. He attacks not our intellect but the very substance of our existence. One's first inclination is to describe Castaneda as a fool who has been

Conversations With Don Juan, he goes much further. He attacks not our intellect but the very substance of our existence. One's first inclination is to describe Castneda as a fool who has been culled by a very clever man. Next you want to launch an investigation of Castaneda to discover what his angle is. Finally the question of truth becomes meaningless because truth has lost its meaning. This alteration of truth does not mean that we cannot judge whether Castaneda is sincere or not. The book is written from a position of absolute honestly that befits a good social scientist. What is true, does no matter very much as Don Juan points out. Whatever one says about the book is basically a futile exercise. Even to say that it defies rationality or that there are no objective criterion which can be applied to the work. It is so far removed from any sort of anlysis that it is beyond judgement. For judgement is, after all, just another rational tool. The only way to approach the book is as if it were a novel. To so lose oneself in Castanedas experiences that it becomes your process to the limits of his ability to relate it. While reading it never forget that it cannot be understood. If you should understand it you should never have read it. The only parallel is to find something esquisitely beautiful when stoned, and then to attempt to discover why it is beautiful. Anyone who has every seen how beautiful a symphony can be or heard a painting can begin to feel what Don Juan teaches These things are to easily explainable once you come down. Try to explain them when your really stoned sometime and you will see what Carlos Castaneda is up against, or perhaps what we are all up against.

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