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TIMOTHY LEARY'S EIGHT CIRCUITS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Excerpted from Robert Anton Wilson's
Cosmic Trigger: Final Secret of the Illuminati

Tunnel-Realities and Imprints

Let's try Dr. Leary's perspective on these mysteries.

To understand neurological space, Dr. Leary assumes that the nervous system consists of eight potential circuits, or "gears," or mini-brains. Four of these brains are in the usually active left lobe and are concerned with our terrestrial survival; four are extraterrestrial, reside in the "silent" or inactive right lobe, and are for use in our future evolution. This explains why the right lobe is usually inactive at this stage of our development, and why it becomes active when the person ingests pyschedelics.

We will explain each of the eight "brains" briefly.

I. THE BIO-SURVIVAL CIRCUIT. This invertebrate brain was the first to evolve (2 to 3 million years ago) and is the first activated when a human infant is born. It programs perception onto an either-or grid divided into nurturing-helpful Things (which it approaches) and noxious-dangerous Things (which it flees, or attacks). The imprinting of this circuit sets up the basic attitude of trust or suspicion which will ever after trigger approach or avoidance.

II. THE EMOTIONAL CIRCUIT. This second, more advanced bio-computer formed when vertebrates appeared and began to compete for territory (perhaps 500,000,000 B.C.). In the individual, this bigger tunnel-reality is activated when the DNA master-tape triggers the metamorphosis from crawling to walking. As every parent knows, the toddler is no longer a passive (bio-survival) infant but a mammalian politician, full of physical (and psychic) territorial demands, quick to meddle in family business and decision-making. Again the first imprint on this circuit remains constant for life (unless brainwashed)

and identifies the stimuli which will automatically trigger dominant, aggressive behavior or submissive, cooperative behavior. When we say that a person is behaving emotionally, egotistically or "like a two-year-old," we mean that s/he is blindly following one of the tunnel-realities imprinted on this circuit.

III. THE DEXTERITY-SYMBOLISM CIRCUIT. This third brain was formed when hominid types began to differentiate from other primate stock (circa 4-5 million B.C.) and is activated for the linear left-lobe functions of the brain, determine our normal modes of artifact-manufacture and conceptual thought, i.e., third circuit "mind."

It is no accident, then, that our logic (and our computer-design) follows either-or, binary structure of these circuits. Nor is it an accident that our geometry, until the last century, has been Euclidean. Euclid's geometry, Aristotle's logic and Newton's physics are meta-programs synthesizing and generalizing first brain forward-back, second brain up-down and third brain right-left programs.

The fourth brain, dealing with the transmission of tribal or ethnic culture across generations, introduces the fourth dimension, time.

Since each of these tunnel-realities consists of biochemical imprints or matrices in the nervous system, each of them is specifically triggered by neuro-transmitters and other drugs.

To activate the first brain take an opiate. Mother Opium and Sister Morphine bring you down to cellular intelligence, bio-survival passivity, the floating consciousness of the newborn. (This is why Freudians identify opiate addiction with the desire to return to infancy.)

To activate the second tunnel-reality, take an abundant quantity of alcohol. Vertebrate territorial patterns and mammalian emotional politics immediately appear when the booze flows, as Thomas Nashe intuitively realized when he characterized the various alcohol states by animal labels: "ass drunk," "goat drunk," "swine drunk," "bear drunk," etc.

To activate the third circuit, try coffee or tea, a high-protein diet, speed or cocaine.

The specific neurotransmitter for circuit four has not been synthesized yet, but it is generated by the glands after pubescence and flows volcanically through the bloodstreams of adolescents.

NONE OF THESE TERRESTRIAL DRUGS CHANGE BASIC BIOCHEMICAL IMPRINTS. The behaviors which they trigger are those which were wired into the nervous system during the first stages of imprint

vulnerability. The circuit II drunk exhibits the emotional games or cons learned from parents in infancy. The circuit III "mind" never gets beyond the permutations and combinations of those tunnel-realities originally imprinted, or abstractions associated with the imprints through later conditioning. And so forth.

But all this Pavlovian-Skinnerian robotism changes drastically and dramatically when we turn to the right lobe, the future circuits and extraterrestrial chemicals.

The four evolving future "brains" are:

V. THE NEUROSOMATIC CIRCUIT. When this fifth "body-brain" is activated, flat Euclidean figure-ground configurations explode multi-dimensionally. Gestalts shift, in McLuhan's terms, from linear VISUAL SPACE to all-encompassing SENSORY SPACE. A hedonic turn-on occurs, a rapturous amusement, a detachment from the previously compulsive mechanism of the first four circuits. I turned this circuit on with pot and Tantra.

This fifth brain began to appear about 4,000 years ago in the first leisure-class civilizations and has been increasing statistically in recent centuries (even before the Drug Revolution), a fact demonstrated by the hedonic art of India, China, Rome and other affluent societies. More recently, Ornstein and his school have demonstrated with electroencephalograms that this circuit represents the first jump from the linear left lobe of the brain to the analogical right lobe.

The opening and imprinting of this circuit has been the preoccupation of "technicians of the occult"--Tantric shamans and hatha yogis. While the fifth tunnel-reality can be achieved by sensory deprivation, social isolation, physiological stress or severe shock (ceremonial terror tactics, as practiced by such rascal-gurus as Don Juan Matus or Aleister Crowley), it has traditionally been reserved to the educated aristocracy of leisure societies who have solved the four terrestrial survival problems.

About 20,000 years ago, the specific fifth brain neurotransmitter was discovered by shamans in the Caspian Sea area of Asia and quickly spread to other wizards throughout Eurasia and Africa. It is, of course, cannabis. Weed. Mother Mary Jane.

It is no accident that the pot-head generally refers to his neural state as "high" or "spaced-out." The transcendence of gravitational, digital, linear, either-or, Aristotelian, Newtonian, Euclidean, planetary orientations (circuits I-IV) is, in evolutionary perspective, part of our neurological preparation for the inevitable migration off our home planet, now beginning. This is why so many pot-heads are STAR TREK freaks and science fiction adepts. (Berkeley,

California, certainly the Cannabis Capital of the U.S., has a Federation Trading Post on Telegraph Avenue, where the well-heeled can easily spend \$500 or more in a single day, buying STAR TREK novels, magazines, newsletters, bumper stickers, photographs, posters, tapes, etc., including even complete blueprints for the starship ENTERPRISE.)

The extraterrestrial meaning of being "high" is confirmed by astronauts themselves; 85% of those who have entered the free-fall zero gravity describe "mystic experiences" or rapture states typical of the neurosomatic circuit. "No photo can show how beautiful Earth looked," raves Captain Ed Mitchell, describing his Illumination in free-fall. He sounds like any successful yogi or pot-head. No camera can show this experience because it is inside the nervous system.

FREE-FALL, AT THE PROPER EVOLUTIONARY TIME, TRIGGERS THE NEUROSOMATIC MUTATION, Leary believes. Previously this mutation has been achieved "artificially" by yogic or shamanic training or by the fifth circuit stimulant, cannabis. Surfing, skiing, skin-diving and the new sexual culture (sensuous massage, vibrators, imported Tantric arts, etc.) have evolved at the same time as part of the hedonic conquest of gravity. The Turn-On state is always described as "floating," or, in the Zen metaphor, "on foot above the ground."

VI. THE NEUROELECTRIC CIRCUIT. The sixth brain consists of the nervous system becoming aware of itself apart from imprinted gravitational reality-maps (circuits I-IV) and even apart from body-rapture (circuit V). Count Korzybski, the semanticist, called this state "consciousness of abstracting." Dr. John Lilly calls it "metaprogramming," i.e., awareness of programming one's programming. This Einsteinian, relativistic contelligence (consciousness-intelligence) recognizes, for instance, that the Euclidean, Newtonian and Aristolelian reality-maps are just three among billions of possible programs or models for experience. I turned this circuit on with Peyote, LSD and Crowley's "magick" metaprograms.

This level of brain-functioning seems to have been reported first around 500 B.C. among various "occult" groups connected by the Silk Route (Rome-North India). It is so far beyond the terrestrial tunnel-realities that those who have achieved it can barely communicate about it to ordinary humanity (circuits I-IV) and can hardly be understood even by fifth circuit Rapture Engineers.

The characteristics of the neuroelectric circuit are high velocity, multiple choice, relativity, and the fission-fusion of all perceptions into parallel science-fiction universes of alternate possibilities.

The mammalian politics which monitor power struggles among terrestrial humanity are here transcended, i.e., seen as static,

artificial, an elaborate charade. One is neither coercively manipulated into another's territorial reality nor forced to struggle against it with reciprocal emotional game-playing (the usual soap-opera dramatics). One simply elects, consciously, whether or not to share the other's reality-model.

Tactics for opening and imprinting the sixth circuit are described and rarely experienced in advanced rajah yoga, and in the hermetic (coded) manuals of the medieval-Renaissance alchemists and Illuminati.

No specific sixth circuit chemical is yet available, but strong psychedelics like mescaline (from my 1962-63 "sacred cactus," peyotl) and psilocybin (from the Mexican "magic mushroom," teonactl) open the nervous system to a mixed-media series of circuit V and circuit VI channels. This is appropriately called "tripping," as distinguished from straight-forward fifth circuit "turning on" or "getting high."

The suppression of scientific research in this area has had the unfortunate result of turning the outlaw drug culture back toward fifth circuit hedonics and pre-scientific tunnel-realities (the occult revival, solipsism, Pop Orientalism). Without scientific discipline and methodology, few can successfully decode the often-frightening (but philosophically crucial) sixth circuit metaprogramming signals. Such scientists as do continue to study this subject dare not publish their results (which are illegal) and record ever-wider tunnel-realities only in private conversations--like the scholars of the Inquisitorial era. (Voltaire announced the Age of Reason two centuries too soon. We are still in the Dark Ages.) Most underground alchemists have given up on such challenging and risky self-work and restrict their trips to fifth circuit erotic tunnels.

The evolutionary function of the sixth circuit is to enable us to communicate at Einsteinian relativities and neuro-electric accelerations, not using third circuit laryngeal-manual symbols but directly via feedback, telepathy and computer link-up. Neuro-electric signals will increasingly replace "speech" (hominid grunts) after space migration.

When humans have climbed out of the atmosphere-gravity well of planetary life, accelerated sixth circuit contelligence will make possible high-energy communication with "Higher Intelligences," i.e., ourselves-in-the-future and other post-terrestrial races.

It is charmingly simple and obvious, once we realize that the spaced-out neural experiences really are extraterrestrial, that getting high and spacing out are accurate metaphors. Circuit V neurosomatic rapture is preparation for the next step in our evolution, migration off the planet. Circuit VI is preparation for

the step after that, interspecies communication with advanced entities possessing electronic (post-verbal) tunnel-realities.

Circuit VI is the "universal translator" often imagined by science-fiction writers, already built into our brains by the DNA tape. Just as the circuits of the future butterfly are already built into the caterpillar.

VII. THE NEUROGENETIC CIRCUIT. The seventh brain kicks into action when the nervous system begins to receive signals from WITHIN THE INDIVIDUAL NEURON, from the DNA-RNA dialogue. The first to achieve this mutation spoke of "memories of past lives," "reincarnation," "immortality," etc. That these adepts were recording something real is indicated by the fact that many of them (especially Hindu and Sufis) gave marvelously accurately poetic vistas of evolution 1,000 or 2,000 years before Darwin, and foresaw Superhumanity before Nietzsche.

The "akashic records" of Theosophy, the "collective unconscious" of Jung, the "phylogenic unconscious" of Grof and Ring, are three modern metaphors for this circuit. The visions of past and future evolution described by those who have had "out-of-body" experiences during close-to-death episodes also describes the trans-time circuit VII tunnel-reality.

Specific exercises to trigger circuit VII are not to be found in yogic teaching; it usually happens, if at all, after several years of the kind of advanced rajah yoga that develops circuit VI facility.

The specific circuit VII neurotransmitter is, of course LSD. (Peyote and psilocybin produce some circuit VII experiences also.)

Circuit VII is best considered, in terms of 1977 science, as the genetic archives, activated by anti-histone proteins. The DNA memory coiling back to the dawn of life. A sense of the inevitability of immortality and interspecies symbiosis comes to all circuit VII mutants; we now see that this, also, is an evolutionary forecast, since WE STAND RIGHT NOW ON THE DOOR-STEP OF EXTENDED LONGEVITY LEADING TO IMMORTALITY.

The exact role of the right-lobe circuits and the reason for their activation in the 1960s cultural revolution now becomes clear. As sociologist F.M. Esfandiary writes in UPWINGERS, "Today when we speak of immortality and of going to another world we no longer mean these in a theological or metaphysical sense. People are now traveling to other worlds. People are now striving for immortality. Transcendence is no longer a metaphysical concept. It has become reality."

The evolutionary function of the seventh circuit and its evolutionary, aeon-spanning tunnel-reality is to prepare us for

conscious immortality and interspecies symbiosis.

VIII. THE NEURO-ATOMIC CIRCUIT. Hold on to your hats and breathe deeply--this is the farthest-out that human intelligence has yet ventured:

Consciousness probably precedes the biological unit or DNA tape-loop. "Out-of-body experiences," "astral projection," contact with alien (extraterrestrial?) "entities" or with a galactic Overmind, etc., such as I've experienced, have all been reported for thousands of years, not merely by the ignorant, the superstitious, the gullible, but often by the finest minds among us (Socrates, Giordano Bruno, Edison, Buckminster Fuller, etc.). Such experiences are reported daily to parapsychologists and have been experienced by such scientists as Dr. John Lilly and Carlos Castaneda. Dr. Kenneth Ring has attributed these phenomena to what he calls, very appropriately, "the extraterrestrial unconscious."

Dr. Leary suggests that circuit VIII is literally neuro-atomic--infra, supra and meta-physiological--a quantum model of consciousness and/or a conscious model of quantum mechanics by the turned-on physicists discussed previously (Prof. John Archibald Wheeler, Saul-Paul Sirag, Dr. Fritjof Capra, Dr. Jack Sarfatti, etc.) indicates strongly that the "atomic consciousness" first suggested by Leary in "The Seven Tongues of God" (1962) is the explanatory link which will unite parapsychology and paraphysics into the first scientific empirical experimental theology in history.

When the nervous system is turned on to this quantum-level circuit, space-time is obliterated. Einstein's speed-of-light barrier is transcended; in Dr. Sarfatti's metaphor, we escape "electromagnetic chauvinism." The contelligence within the quantum projection booth IS the entire cosmic "brain," just as the micro-miniaturized DNA helix IS the local brain guiding planetary evolution. As Lao-tse said from his own Circuit VIII perspective, "The greatest is within the smallest."

Circuit VIII is triggered by Katamine, a neuro-chemical researched by Dr. John Lilly, which is also (according to a wide-spread but unconfirmed rumor) given to astronauts to prepare them for space. High doses of LSD also produce some circuit VIII quantum awareness.

This neuro-atomic contelligence is four mutations beyond terrestrial domesticity. (The current ideological struggle is between circuit IV tribal moralists-or-collectivists and circuit V hedonic individualists.) When our need for higher intelligence, richer involvement in the cosmic script, further transcendence, will no longer be satisfied by physical bodies, not even by immortal bodies

hopping across space-time at Warp 9, circuit VIII will open a further frontier. New universes and realities. "Beyond theology: the science and art of Godmanship," as Alan Watts once wrote.

It is therefore possible that the mysterious "entities" (angels and extraterrestrials) monotonously reported by circuit VIII visionaries are members or races already evolved to this level. But it is also possible, as Leary and Sarfatti more recently suggest, that They are ourselves-in-the-future.

The left-lobe terrestrial circuits contain the learned lessons of our evolutionary past (and present). The right-lobe extraterrestrial circuits are the evolutionary script for our future.

Thus far, there have been two alternative explanations of why the Drug Revolution happened. The first is presented in a sophisticated way by anthropologist Weston LaBarre, and in an ignorant, moralistic way by most anti-drug propaganda in the schools and mass media. This explanation says, in essence, that millions have turned away from the legal DOWN drugs to illegal HIGH drugs because we are living in troubled times and many are seeking escape into fantasy.

This theory, at its best, only partially explains the ugliest and most publicized aspect of the revolution--the reckless drug abuse characteristic of immaturity. It says nothing about the millions of respectable doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc., who have turned away from second circuit intoxication with booze to fifth circuit rapture with weed.

Nor does it account at all for the thoughtful, philosophical sixth circuit investigations of persons of high intelligence and deep sensibility, such as Aldous Huxley, Dr. Stanley Grof, Masters-Houston, Alan W. Watts, Carlos Castaneda, Dr. John Lilly and thousands of scientific and lay researchers on consciousness.

A more plausible theory, devised by psychiatrist Norman Zinberg out of the work of Marshall McLuhan, holds that modern electronic media have so shifted the nervous system's parameters that young people no longer enjoy "linear" drugs like alcohol and find meaning only in "non-linear" weed and psychedelics.

This is certainly part of the truth, but it is too narrow and overstates TV and computers without sufficiently stressing the general technological picture--the ongoing Science-Fiction Revolution of which the most significant aspects are Space Migration, Increased Intelligence and Life Extension, which Leary has condensed into his S.M.I².L.E. formula.

Space Migration plus Increased Intelligence plus Life Extension means expansion of humanity into all space-time. $S.M. + I^2. + L.E. = \text{infinity}$.

Without totally endorsing Charles Fort's technological mysticism ("It steam-engines when it comes steam-engine time"), it is obvious that the DNA metaprogram for planetary evolution is far wiser than any of our individual nervous systems--which are, in a sense, giant robots or sensors for DNA. Early science-fiction of brilliant writers like Stapledon, Clarke, Heinlein; Kubrick's 2001--all were increasingly clear DNA signals transmitted through the intuitive right lobe of sensitive artists, preparing us for the extraterrestrial mutation.

It is scarcely coincidental that mainstream "literary" intellectuals -- the heir of the Platonic-aristocratic tradition that a gentleman never uses his hands, monkeys with tools or learns a manual craft--despise both science-fiction and the dope culture. Nor is it coincidental that the WHOLE EARTH CATALOGS-- created by Stewart Brand, a graduate of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters--are the New Testament of the rural drop-out culture, each issue bulging with tons of eco-technological information about all the manual, dextrous, gadgety know-how that Plato and his heirs consider fit only for slaves. Not surprisingly, Brand's latest publication, CO-EVOLUTION QUARTERLY, has been devoted to publicizing Prof. Gerard O'Neill's space-habitat, L5.

Nor is it an accident that dopers seem to prefer science-fiction to any other reading, even including the extraterrestrial-flavored Hindu scriptures and occult-shamanic circuit VI-VIII trip-poets like Crowley and Hesse.

The circuit VI drugs may have contributed much to the metaprogramming consciousness that has led to sudden awareness of "male chauvinism" (women's liberationists), "species chauvinism" (ecology, Lilly's dolphin studies), "type-G star chauvinism" (Carl Sagan), even "oxygen chauvinism" (the CETI conference), etc. The imprinted tunnel-realities which identify one as "white-male-American-earthian" etc. or "black-female-Cuban" etc. are no longer big enough to enclose our exploding contelligence.

As TIME magazine said on November 26, 1973, "Within ten years, according to pharmacologists, they will have perfected pills and cranial electrodes of providing life-long bliss for everyone on Earth." The 1960s hysteria about weed and acid was just the overture to this fifth circuit break-through. Nathan S. Kline, M.D., predicts real aphrodisiacs, drugs to speed up learning, drugs to foster or terminate any behavior. Those who were burned or jailed at the beginning of the Revolution of Outer Technology. Those who were jailed or beaten by cops in the 1960s were forerunners of the Revolution of Inner Technology.

STAR TREK is a better guide to the emerging reality than

anything in the NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS. The life-support and defense-system engineer, Scotty (circuit I), the emotional-sentimental Dr. McCoy (circuit II), the logical science officer Mr. Spock (circuit III) and the alternately paternalistic and romantic Captain Kirk (circuit IV) are perpetually voyaging through our future neurological history and encountering circuit V, VI, VII, and VIII intelligences, however crudely presented.

In short, the various levels of consciousness and circuits we have been discussing, and illustrating, are all biochemical imprints in the evolution of the nervous system. Each imprint creates a bigger tunnel-reality. In the Sufi metaphor, the donkey on the which we ride becomes a different donkey after each imprint. The metaprogrammer continually learns more and is increasingly able to be aware of itself operating. We are thus evolving to intelligence-studying-intelligence (the nervous system studying the nervous system) and are more and more capable of accelerating our own evolution.

Leary now symbolizes intelligence-studying-intelligence by the mark, I².

On the lower levels, you see with one "I," so to speak. On the higher levels, you see with many "I"s.

And space-time shifts from three Euclidean dimensions to non-Euclidean multi-dimensionality.

By Robert Anton Wilson

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