



XIII
Transformation

**I Am You and What I See Is Me:
A Fourth Anthology of Writings
about Psychedelics**

Edited by Raymond Soulard, Jr.

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Number Twenty-three

This volume is for those looking
through the Door, wondering . . .

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Echoes

Overhead the albatross
Hangs motionless upon the air
And deep beneath the rolling waves
In labyrinths of coral caves
The echo of a distant time
Comes willowing across the sand

And everything is green and submarine
And no one showed us to the land
And no one knows the wheres or whys
And something stirs and something tries
And starts to climb toward the light

Strangers passing in the street
By chance two separate glances meet
And I am you and what I see is me
And do I take you by the hand
And lead you through the land
And help me understand
The best I can

And no one calls us to the Lord
And no one forces down our eyes
And no one speaks and no one tries
No one flies around the sun

Regardless, everyday you form
Upon my waking eyes
Inviting and inciting me to rise
And through the window in the wall
Comes streaming in on sunlight wings
A million bright ambassadors of morning

And no one sings me lullabies
And no one makes me close my eyes
So I throw the windows wide
And call to you across the sky

Pink Floyd, 1971.

Recreational Medicine

from *A Dangerous Book*

by Roger Stephens

*If the doors of perception were cleansed,
everything would appear as it is . . . infinite.*
—William Blake

Recreation. We have learned to identify this word with physically involving ourselves with settings of outdoor adventure (via recreational vehicles perhaps), getting ourselves out of the usual ruts we spend so much of our lives in (by playing volleyball, or golf, or taking a trip to the ballpark), or just doing something different. Recreation generally means at least temporarily moving our attentions from the required to the preferred, from the depleting and exhausting to the revitalizing and restoring.

Recreation literally means to create again. Like the word wilderness (which to the Native American mind was a meaningless term, since what we call the wilderness he called home, and didn't become truly wild until the white man came), the mere existence of the concept of recreational retreat (!) is also an indication that somewhere down deep we recognize that our normal patterns of thought and activity are somehow bereft of spirituality, requiring moments of rejuvenation and regeneration—the re-creation of something which has been depleted.

By recreational medicine, I am referring to those generally natural substances which have the effect of at least temporarily restoring our naturally unified and unifying perspectives on life, of recreating and probing an understanding of existence which has been all but ignored in the mad rush for money, power, or even just existing in a setting which has become violently inhumane.

The ideals of brotherly love, community, altruism, honesty, and so on, are ideals to us only because our perceptions of life and our place in it have been truncated in the interests of business, government, and religion. Our natural condition implies all of these naturally; this world is already the land of milk and honey, but so long as we can be convinced that it isn't, we'll never see that the so-called kingdom is already at hand, already the case.

Recreational medicines are medicines, not diets. They exist to treat, not habituate. Recreational medicines, when properly used, have the much-needed facility of reorienting our perceptions of life from the artificial back to the actual, of realigning our senses of who we are and what we are here for, of cleaning off, even if only for a moment, the warpings and aberrations which civilization and cosmic alienation have superimposed on our world views, of opening further the doors of perception.

Although you won't hear it in public very often, and certainly not from organized religions, recreational medicines make available certain perspectives and descriptions of life behind the veil which are uncannily similar to those recorded by mystics and prophets from all cultures, from the Tibetans and the Taoists to the early Christian mystics and nearly all indigenous cultures, descriptions which are far too similar to be dismissed out of hand.

The mystical state is the direct experience of reality without the filtering and objectifying processes of the socialized mind getting in the way. While this state seems to be available to the devotees only after years of meditation and/or other rigorous ascetic practices, it is becoming clear that there are other paths up that particular mountain.

How do we get beyond the curtain of maya? What might we find if ever we should momentarily slip into an altered state of awareness? What does the world look like when brought out from behind the grids of knowledge and designation we have overlaid it with? In his marvelous little book, *The Doors of Perception* (Harper & Row, 1954), Aldous Huxley quotes the Cambridge philosopher C. D. Broad:

“. . . we should do well to consider much more seriously than we have hitherto been inclined to do . . . the suggestion that the function of the brain and nervous system and sense organs is in the main eliminative and not productive. Each person is at each moment capable of remembering all that has ever happened to him and of perceiving everything that is happening everywhere in the universe. The function of the brain and nervous system is to protect us from being overwhelmed and confused by this mass of largely useless and irrelevant knowledge, by shutting out most of what we should otherwise perceive or remember at any moment, and leaving only that very small and special selection which is likely to be practically useful.”

In referring to this state of all-knowing as Mind At Large, Huxley continues:

“Each one of us is potentially Mind at Large. But in so far as we are animals, our business is at all costs to survive. To make biological survival possible, Mind at Large has to be funneled through the reducing valve of the brain and nervous system. What comes out at the other end is a measly trickle of the kind of consciousness which will help us stay alive on the planet.

“To formulate and express the contents of this reduced awareness, man has invented and endlessly elaborated those symbol-systems and implicit philosophies which we call languages. Every individual is at once the beneficiary and the victim of the linguistic tradition into which he has been born—the beneficiary inasmuch as language gives access to the accumulated records of other people's experience, the victim in so far as it confirms him in the belief that reduced awareness is the only awareness, and as it bedevils his sense of reality, so that he is all too apt to take his concepts for data, his words for actual things. That which, in the language of religion, is called 'this world' is the universe of reduced awareness, expressed, and, as it were, petrified by language.

"The various 'other worlds' with which human beings erratically make contact are so many elements in the totality of the awareness belonging to Mind At Large. Most people, most of the time, know only what comes through the reducing valve and is consecrated as genuinely real by the local language. Certain persons, however, seem to be born with a kind of temporary by-pass which circumvents the reducing valve. In others, temporary by-passes may be acquired either spontaneously, or as the result of deliberate 'spiritual exercises,' or through hypnosis, or by means of drugs. Through these permanent or temporary by-passes there flows . . . something more than, and above all something different from the carefully selected utilitarian material which our narrowed, individual minds regard as a complete, or at least sufficient, picture of reality."

In other words, reality is infinitely more than our socialized and language-dependent concepts can possibly accommodate. The reason modern life has become such a spiritual wasteland is because, having depended exclusively on concepts and ideas—symbols—that our minds can understand, we have failed to live in accord with what those symbols claim to, yet fail to represent, i.e., the real world. The result is that because we don't really understand reality and our place in it, we mess it up, like trying to drive a stick shift car without using that mysterious pedal on the left.

As human beings, we are all searching for truth. Truth is not partial, like our intellects would like to presume . . . it is whole. If we are to perceive truth, then there is ultimately no choice but to at least temporarily distance ourselves from our concepts about life to see what it really is, to remove, in the safety of our own times and spaces, the blockages which keep us from seeing more of it. Recreational medicines are often helpful in this pursuit.

I am using the alternative term "recreational medicines" to refer to those substances which, for a variety of covert and self-serving reasons, officialdom has chosen to demonize, namely, psychedelic drugs, and most notably among these cannabis, mescaline, lysergic acid, and psilocybin. The aura of fear surrounding these l-openers is the result of nearly a hundred years of half-truths, exaggerations, and outright lies concerning the nature, uses, benefits, and applications of these medicines.

*Those who corrupt the public mind are just as evil
as those who steal from the public purse.*

—Adlai Stevenson

The American government, with the full support of business and religion, has declared and steadily escalated a war against its own people, justifying this war (as all wars are justified) on the grounds of fear cloaked in largely imagined threats to social morality and freedom. The real threat to the status quo is loss of control over people's minds, but you won't often hear that in public. The so-called drug war is a classic study in the intentional obfusca-

tion of reality.

They D.A.R.E. not speak the truth about these substances because the truth does not even begin to justify the continued use of brute force, spying, confiscation, and legal chicanery which are so much a part of any effort at morality policing.

One of the supreme ironies of this war is that a nation so publicly concerned about sending a wrong message should be sending so many. We are told that America stands for freedom, but not the freedom to investigate your own life in the privacy of your own home. "Drugs are bad for you," but at the next commercial break we see a little scene in which the message is "When you get sick, buy these drugs . . . they're good for you!" Drug peddlers are bad, drug stores are good.

*As soon as men decide that all means are permitted to fight an
evil, then their good becomes indistinguishable from the evil that
they set out to destroy.*

—Christopher Dawson

*All people are too serious and half-insane
when they declare a war against other people.*

—Lin Yutang

Leaving aside for the moment the ethical stature of this puritanical legacy, the psychology of the war on drugs seeks to associate the most benign with the most vicious of forbidden drugs, thereby doing a disservice not only to people who are genuinely interested in knowing the truth, but also to the credibility of those making such claims. You can credibly shout wolf only so many times. Despite all the shrill public rhetoric to the contrary, there is no similarity, for instance, between the effects of crack cocaine and hemp, or between heroin and mescaline. You might as well group cyanide and aspirin together, then claim that aspirin is bad because cyanide is lethal.

The more corrupt the state, the more laws.

—Tacitus

*It is the old practice of despots to use
a part of the people to keep the rest in order.*

—Thomas Jefferson

All medicines, like all people, are not created equal. Some are good for your soul, some are not. Experience is always the best teacher, and yours probably has, and probably will, differ from mine in some respects.

We are concerned here with that class of substances called psychedelics, mainly cannabis, mescaline, lysergic acid, and psilocybin. These ought not

be confused with that class of drugs called hallucinogens. Psychedelics, or psychogens as they are sometimes called, reveal some of the unlabeled aspects and uncommon dimensions of things that are already there in everyday objects like chairs and apples and flowers and people, while hallucinogens show you things that aren't there, like pink elephants.

Cannabis, also called marijuana, hemp, grass, reefer, and a colorful bouquet of other regional or "hip" names, is a naturally occurring herb with a remarkably wide assortment of uses far beyond its merely psychedelic properties. It has been a social, economic, and medicinal staple for thousands of years throughout the world, rendering such commodities as paper and textiles (everything from silk-like fabrics to canvas, a word derived from cannabis); the seeds can be pressed for refinable oils, and the pressings used as a nutritious cattle fodder; hemp can be used as a building material of wide application, and since it contains over 400 medicinally active chemicals, its contribution to medicine in general would be profound.

Even the government has occasionally had to admit the value of cannabis, as when in World War II, when the Japanese captured the Philippine Islands and America's source of hemp (used for rope, canvas, and parachute rigging, Mr. Bush). National security thus threatened, the Department of Agriculture published and distributed a film entitled "Hemp For Victory." This instructional patriotic film encouraged American farmers to grow hemp to help the war effort, showing how to grow it, how to harvest it, and how to market it. There have even been times in our history when it was illegal not to grow it. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson rank as the nation's most prolific hemp growers.

As another small example of the misinformation which has been so widely propagated concerning this valuable plant, consider the facts concerning health risks. Alcohol and tobacco annually account directly for hundreds of thousands of human deaths, indirectly for hundreds of thousands more, yet these are both quite legal, mainly because they represent vested economic interests, members in good standing of the New York Stock Exchange. And yet, in the thousands of years of medical records up to and including the present, there is not a single record of someone dying from the use of cannabis. So much for credibility.

Mescaline is the active ingredient in the peyote cactus which is indigenous to the American southwestern and Mexico. It, too, has been used for centuries as a visionary tool, an aid to vision quests, and a sacrament of the highest order in many Native American religions. Popularized by the writings of Carlos Castaneda in the Don Juan series, mescaline opens rooms in our spiritual mansions which have much to offer us, rooms which are meant to be opened and investigated, but rooms which the present hysteria has made off limits. Spending time in these rooms takes our attention, often permanently, away from the frenzy and insanity of business as usual, so spending time in those rooms was outlawed for economic and religious purposes.

Psilocybin is the active ingredient in certain mushrooms which have been used by humans since before the dawn of agriculture. A thought-provoking theory put forward by ethnobiologist Terrence McKenna holds that mankind has been ingesting psilocybin for at least the past several hundred thousand years, but that the end of the last ice age brought a drier climate and mushroom scarcity. The climatic changes forced these nomadic societies to settle down to the practice of agriculture, which was the major stabilizing influence enabling what we now know as civilization.

McKenna suggests that such human ideals as community, brotherly love, altruism, kindness, and so on, which are heightened and amplified under the effects of psilocybin, used to be universally experienced, but that with the drier climate, mushrooms grew scarce, and man was forced to develop a strong ego, leading directly to the concept of ownership, first of his woman and children, then his world. (See *OMNI*, May 1993.)

This is not an idea that can be dismissed lightly. Evolution takes place in harmony with prevailing conditions, and when the prevailing conditions include a moist climate, lots of ungulates like deer, antelope, and buffalo leaving field pies everywhere, with psychedelic mushrooms growing everywhere there are field pies, and where there are apes becoming people, these proto-people will incorporate the mushroom and its influences into their being, just as we now incorporate Big Macs and cough syrup into ours.

For hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of years, while our brains were growing and developing to their present form, we ate magic mushrooms. But since the end of the last ice age and the drying of large areas of the formerly lush world, the mushroom has grown more scarce. Also during this period we humans have experienced a growing alienation from the planet, from each other, and from ourselves, as evidenced by the relatively recent inventions of religion and state warfare. People who use psilocybin are, for the most part, quite peaceful in their dealings with life. There just might be a connection.

Lysergic acid, better known as LSD, is an alkaloid produced by ergot, a type of grain rot. First isolated in the 1930s by a Swiss chemist named Albert Hoffman, it was popularized through the research of Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert, and others. Though it promised to offer psychiatry an invaluable new tool to investigate the causes of mental illness, it was quickly banned by the government on the grounds that it was dangerous. It is, but not for the reasons given, for like other psychedelics, LSD offers a perspective on human consciousness which endangers the profits of war machines and Wal Marts everywhere. A simple, peaceful, and harmonious society is not the goal of consumerism.

I would characterize my own personal and largely occasional experiences with psychedelics as predominantly religious in tone, in the sense that they more clearly revealed the interconnectedness of all of Life than is normally evident. Psychedelics, in modest amounts and sensible frequency of usage, offer an existential (you have to experience it to understand it) per-

spective on who we really are and what this world is really all about. I have never had a bad trip, and have met astoundingly few others who claim to have had one. Bad trips are generally agreed to be more a function of how out-of-focus your head is than of the drug itself.

But the economic powers of the world don't want us to get high, to elevate our consciousness, to learn our true place in the world. Getting high raises us above the fear and anxiety which have become such profitable by-products of modern economies. It's bad for business when your customer learns that he doesn't need your services.

The old notion is that a drug that makes you feel good, like booze, when you stagger around and say, "Hey, I'm great, I'm the best one on the block," that's not what we mean by feeling good or getting high. Getting high is that sense of union, wonder, revelation, merging with something that's bigger than yourself.

—Timothy Leary

The changes which are happening in the world today are happening in order to free future generations from the artificial, symbolic, and largely life-denying social practices which come to the fore in the past several centuries of human history. People do not exist in order to contribute their lives to some gross national product, to betray their natural dignity in the interests of sloganeers waving flags, to work like dogs all their lives just to accumulate little green pieces of paper, or to live under the domination of abstractions like countries or religions. We are here to discover, in new and never before experienced ways, who each of us really is.

If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities, and so weave a less arbitrary social fabric, one in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place.

—Margaret Mead

It is not my purpose here to recommend the use of psychedelics, nor to discourage it. Rather, it is to affirm your unalienable right to make your own choices in life, and you can't make a choice if you're not given one, or if the information you are given on which to base that choice is heavily garbled with deceit. Psychedelics, liberated from the fear which has been caked on them in years past, can contribute immeasurably to our understanding of human life and our ability to get along with each other. If used sensibly, they open doorways which, though unacknowledged by society as a whole, are nonetheless real, doorways which lead to a deeper and broader understanding of just what it means to be a human being.

As one guru said after taking an enormous dose of LSD, it's good in that it gives you a glimpse of what's behind the veil, but with the drug you can't

stay, you have to come back again. Psychedelics are not ends in themselves, any more than religious practices or chasing the American dream are ends in themselves. Rather, they are additional clues and hints as to what is already the case. You can find your way much more easily when you are familiar with the territory.

Finally, use is not the same as abuse, despite the frenzied rhetoric to the contrary. The slogan "Just Say No" is fittingly anti-life in a time when fear and anxiety dominate human experience. "No" denies, it excludes, and it leads ultimately to unconsciousness of reality. Instead of "Just Say No," the slogan ought to be "Just say Know," because however it may be cloaked, ignorance is never a good teacher.

Psychedelic Culture

An Interview with Terence McKenna

by Bruce Eisner
copyright 1998 Bruce Eisner

Bruce Eisner: The first question I have is: How do you think psychedelics should be sensibly used in a culture or society?

Terence McKenna: Well, it depends upon whether you're talking about a very small, racially coherent, and homogeneous culture like a rain forest tribe, or a mega-culture like the contemporary United States. The ways in which psychedelics are to be used are obviously very different. In a small, aboriginal culture, there's usually complete agreement on the basic myth that the culture is using to manage its image of itself in the world. In a complex culture—a modern, high-tech industrial culture—people tend to evolve themselves into tribal subsets that are little images of the original aboriginal cultural situation.

Basically, the psychedelics induce boundary-dissolving experiences. And if everyone in the culture values that experience, then the culture itself can build its values around that dissolution, around the idea of journeys to and from a spirit world or something like that. In the high-tech industrial cultures, everyone is left to sort it out for themselves and, of course, some people conclude that psychedelics let you talk to the space people, and other people conclude that the experience is neurological noise, and so forth and so on.

So in the case of our own culture, we're really still figuring out how to use psychedelics. A lot of people like to do low doses in complex social environments, like rave parties. Other people like to be one-on-one with a friend or someone they trust, or even by themselves, and do classic, in-the-wilderness-alone-type journeying. I think probably it's a matter of personality, what age you are, and what kind of values are being discussed or promoted around you.

B: Well, let's take a look at the future. Do you think that our culture eventually will integrate psychedelics in the same way that, say, one of these smaller tribal cultures does?

T: It may. Because of the creativity of people like Sasha Shulgin and the entire pharmacological community, there is going to be an endless number of new psychoactive and psychedelic drugs. Also, the more we learn about the botany of this planet, the more psychedelic substances we discover, and the more sources we find for the substances we already know.

The thing that seems to hold back the integration of psychedelics in our

culture is the fact that we obtain these experiences through ingesting substances. The access to these states of mind is now at the edge of technology through virtual reality and the Internet and so forth—people are trying to produce altered states of consciousness that don't require that you swallow a pill or drink a brew. This may mean that eventually we will have psychedelic experiences without drugs. This could be through virtual reality or through electromagnetic induction—some kind of brain machine, something like that. In principle, there is no reason why the experience has to come through a substance. But, in fact, at least to this stage of our development, that's been the most effective way that we have found.

B: Just as a kind of aside, I remember talking with Leary and I suggested that perhaps the most powerful psychoactive of the future would be a little nano-machine that would go in and reprogram your brain the way that you wanted it to be reprogrammed. One of those little nano-machines that—

T: Nanosites. Well, there are all kinds of things—for example, suppose that a drug company were to embrace the idea of recreational drugs and then put out two or three million dollars to produce a drug which did nothing more than let you remember your dreams. It wouldn't be marketed as a psychedelic. It wouldn't even be called a psychedelic, but in fact that might be the most psychedelic of all drugs. A lucid dreaming drug, or a remember-your-dreams-while-awake drug.

You see, over the past fifteen years or so, the largest area where money is being spent in the high-tech democracies has gone from military research and development to the entertainment industry. I think that's a clear signal that psychedelic experiences by some means or another are going to be delivered to the public. The public is extremely hungry for this. This is why brain machines, which so far have not been that stunning without drugs, have nonetheless gotten a lot of venture capital interested in them. If you ever could make a brain machine that was as good as a drug, the world would beat a path to your door, and the culture would applaud you. You would not be run out on a rail. You would be hailed as an Edison or a Ford.

B: You don't think they would apply the Analogs Act to it?

T: That would be a caffight that I would pay to sit in the front row to watch.

You know, in a way, TV is an electronic drug. They have studied how it affects people. Your eyes glaze, your brain waves flatten, blood pools in your rear end. It is the presentation of someone who has taken some kind of a drug. But the culture is totally accepting of TV because it is marketed as a home appliance, not a drug. This tells us something about the cultural biases and the strategies that might lead to an acceptance of these things.

B: You've made a major point of emphasizing the use of sacred plants over synthetic psychedelics. Do you think that synthetics have any place at all in the psychedelic medicine chest?

T: Oh yes, absolutely! My distinction between synthetics and naturally-occurring substances isn't an ontological one. In other words, I'm not saying that one side is good, the other bad. It's simply that usually with a naturally-occurring substance you have a history of human usage, and so, in a sense, you already have your human data which tells you that this substance doesn't cause birth defects, blindness, impotence, Parkinsonism, whatever. Because psychedelics are illegal, we don't get that kind of information on new synthetics. No one is allowed to give them to human beings in a proper clinical situation. So new drugs—they may be wonderful, they may be terrible—but society is arranged in such a way that we just can't find out.

If all drugs were properly tested, and clinical trials were done and so forth, we might well discover that out of the examples set by nature we might make new and improved drugs. LSD is a perfect example of that. There are analogs of LSD active in the milligram range—like chanoclavine and isobergine and these sorts of things. LSD is definitely a better drug and we can now see that LSD represents an engineering improvement on those things.

So I think there will be more and more of this. But we can't go forward with synthetic psychedelic chemistry until we get the social attitudes and the legal situation straightened out around these issues.

B: I would like to talk more about LSD next. I attended a book-signing of yours at the Capitola Book Cafe, and I was sitting in the back and listening to you, and you mentioned that you first tried LSD back in the early '70s, but that it never really triggered off a visual psychedelic experience for you. Do you think that might have had something to do with the dosage you took, or the quality or purity of the drug?

T: Well, I haven't revisited it in a while—I started taking LSD in the summer of '65. It did all kinds of things, but I had in hand Havelock Ellis' "The Dance of Life," and Aldous Huxley's *The Doors of Perception*, and it never did the specific things described there. You know, the jeweled ruins dripping with alien life and all of that.

I did discover that I could smoke a lot of hash on LSD, and it pushed it much more in the direction that I wanted to go. So I ended up always doing that, and even eating hash with acid.

I may have a sort of unique physiology. Even at 300 micrograms what happens for me in terms of visuals—hallucination—on LSD is simply little things that look like disturbances in the wallpaper. Little fan-like, scale-like scintillations. They look to me more like they're something in the visual cortex, rather than what I would call a true hallucination.

Finally when I got to psilocybin, it was like: "Ah, this does what I've

been looking for!" The LSD was very psychoanalytic. It was hard on me physically. I spent a lot of time lying around the day after. And psilocybin seemed to deliver the hallucinations with very little wrack and ruin on the body. And, of course, DMT is even more dramatic in that direction.

So that was when I got the idea that what I was interested in was the tryptamines.

B: That was actually going to be my next question, because you do emphasize that you prefer tryptamines over phenethylamines and the indole alkaloids. I think you pretty much covered that question, and that drugs are so idiosyncratic might possibly have something to do with it. I know that, for instance, say a drug like Ketamine—some people have these amazing out-of-body experiences. For me, for instance, having experienced Ketamine, before it was scheduled, was more of a body high, and had a very little visual component to it. It reminded me of a super-PCP or something, but doesn't really deliver.

And other people, you know, think it's the ultimate.

T: Well, a similar situation exists with 5-MEO-DMT, on which I barely hallucinate at all. I've talked to people who say it's the most profound experience they've ever had.

But, you know, what you have to bear in mind is this: drug receptors are as individual a thing as height, hair color, eye color, and so forth. And it is simply true that we are born with affinities for certain drugs, and a lack of affinity for others.

The Irish are supposed to be able to drink. I can't drink. If I have two beers, then I'm worthless.

So I think that part of what growing into drug awareness means is not taking every drug and every combination around, but actually learning what works for you. Another good example is the tropanes. I would say that maybe nineteen out of twenty people—including myself—should have nothing to do with that stuff. But there do seem to be people who can handle it.

B: Tropanes are—?

T: Oh, Daturas and things like that. Well, I just wouldn't go near that. I've had them several times in my life, and each time it's been nearly disastrous.

B: Well, it's because it's more like a deliriant than a psychedelic, and there's very little recovery of memory . . .

T: That's right, but Ketamine is also considered a deliriant. The thing about Ketamine, though, that has to be said is that it has a vast range of presentational possibilities based on dose. Some people who do it quite

frequently do as little as 50 milliliters. That is obviously a very, very different experience than 200 milliliters.

I did it about five or six times, and I always did quite high doses, and while it was happening it was very interesting but I could bring almost nothing out of it. And to me that's a requirement of a psychotropic substance—that you be able to talk about it afterwards.

A lot of people don't make that demand. Maybe they're not verbal to start with. You know, somebody will tell you that they took acid and then they took PCP and then they did something else, and then you say, "Well, how was it?" And they say, "Really weird!"

That's not really enough information to make me want to go there. I think one should spend at least as much time describing any given drug experience as actually having it.

B: Yes, and I would have to say that some people should probably never take them at all.

T: I think that's absolutely true. The way I look at it is that what these things do, whether you're for it or against it, what they do is dissolve boundaries, and most of us have our boundaries too high, too well-defended. But some people can barely keep their boundaries in place, and they are not candidates for psychedelics. People who are seeing visions on the natch, or people who have very low self-esteem, or people who are given to paranoia, these people should take themselves out of the game. In the same way that I don't try out for the NBA since I know that I wouldn't be good at it. They should just leave this to other people.

B: Exactly!

I'll give you one more drug question, and then we'll go to something else here.

I've never tried ayahuasca. Can you explain what I would get out of an experience with ayahuasca that I wouldn't get with another major psychedelic?

T: Well, each one of these things is different. Even though ayahuasca is DMT made orally active in the presence of a MAO-inhibitor, to me the amazing thing about ayahuasca—one of the amazing things, and this is unique to it—it's the only psychedelic I know where after a major trip the next day you actually have more energy than you had going into it.

It's almost like a violation of the laws of physics. How can it be that we stayed up all night singing and hallucinating and raving, and now it's nine o'clock in the morning, and you feel great? And you actually never have to pay that energy debt?

That is very interesting to me. The other thing about ayahuasca, which may happen on other psychedelics, but probably rarely, is that it seems to

be the one that is most friendly towards synesthesia. In other words, you can see the songs you sing on ayahuasca, and that's a pretty general phenomenon. So that makes ayahuasca an excellent vehicle for studying synesthesia, and trying to understand how it works. Those are the things that makes it unique.

And then, of course, the other thing that may be attractive or repellent to people is that it is the most physical of psychedelics. In other words, if you get sick on LSD, there was something wrong with the LSD. But if you get sick on ayahuasca, it's working just fine.

Some people of a certain persuasion feel that it's very important to have that full body involvement. It's not a head trip—ayahuasca. It's a full body trip.

B: Let's change gears a little bit here.

Now you have predicted what you call an eschaton—or end of time—in the year 2012. Can you give us a picture of what that would be like? In twenty words or less!?

T: Well, at this time it's a little like asking somebody staring east at 2 AM to describe the coming dawn. We're looking in the right direction, true. But it's still a little early to say just what it will be.

I think there's a general feeling in society that stretches from the wackiest of quasi-suicidal UFO cults right up into very sober, rational aspects of the technical community—a general feeling that human historical development, or technological development, is in some kind of asymptotic acceleration. Nano-technology, psychedelic chemistry, the Internet, the cloning of mammals, and whatever the rest of the list is—all of these things synergizing each other are producing very, very rapidly a world almost incomprehensible to most people. There is no reason to suppose that this process is going to slow down. It has apparently been accelerating for as long as you care to think about it.

So at this point it's really moving fast. At any point there could be a breakthrough: cold fusion, real extraterrestrial contact, a nano-technological assembler, a telepathic drug, a longevity drug that stops aging. It could come from any of so many directions that I'm sure we'll be surprised. But what we can almost count on is enormous breakthroughs in unexpected directions. In fact this is already happening and changing reality all around us.

I don't really know you all that well, but I'm sure you're probably pretty internetted and connected. So am I. Three years ago, very few people even knew what the Internet was. Most people today don't know what it is, or hear about it, but are busy with their lives. Well, this is only one of many, many factors. If you seek the edge—if you insist on taking the latest drugs, possessing the latest technology, and being informed of the latest nano-tech breakthroughs—then you are really living in a very different world than the

people around you.

People are becoming frozen in time. I meet people who say they don't want to be connected. Life is already too complicated. Well, that's their business—but what they are essentially doing is saying: "Send me to the showers. Get me out of the game. The game has become too complicated for me to play or understand."

I don't want to be in that position. I think it's very exciting what's happening. Human experience is moving toward some kind of culmination. All the things that we have dreamed of for the past thousand years—a physical paradise, a world of healthy, balanced human beings, a world of free access to information—all of these things are pretty much on target and being delivered.

But one has to notice that this is going on. Of course, the psychedelic community is very aware of this, because in a sense the business of the psychedelic community is to notice what's going on. But the business of a lot of communities is to deny what's going on.

For example, the political community. It doesn't lead us boldly into the future. It tries to deny that there is anywhere to go, and we should simply worry about health care maintenance, balanced budgets, and what is going on with Arafat and Netanyahu.

B: Right. When you think of the left wing politics these days—I saw Jerry Brown recently at the Digital Be-In, and he was making a big point that because of the technology there is a gap between the haves and the have-nots that is growing wider because the haves have access to this technology and the have-nots don't. He's concerned about that, and wanting to give it to the other people as well, to make it available to everybody.

That was his main point, but he wasn't too well-received because the group that he was in was, you know, all the cutting-edge, high-tech computer people.

T: Well, I would actually take issue with him. I've heard this argument before—that the rise of the Internet has created the most elite culture in history. But if the curve of the development of the modern automobile had followed the same developmental curve as the computer, automobiles would today cost \$100 apiece, would go 50,000 miles an hour, and a tank of gas would take you to the moon.

It is true that today the Internet is a technology of elites. But I think that well before 2012—by 2005 or so—the computer that sits on my desk today will be a stud earring, and it could sell for about two hundred bucks.

This is an enormous empowering of third world and non-high-tech people.

But let me make another point about left wing politics. Part of the problem there is that left wing politics is as afraid of the future as right wing politics. What we are hearing from the left is resource management, ecological catastrophe, necessary slow-down in the development of technol-

ogy, and so forth. But these are a) things that are not going to happen, and b) it's no vision for the future.

So I think that both the right and the left have, in a sense, been transcended. What the right offers is consumer capitalism—a complete sell-out to the idea that you are what you own, and that's all there is. What the left is offering is a kind of purist rejectionism that may let you sleep at night but doesn't form the basis of any coherent political program to lead us into the future.

B: Yes. And I think you've probably made it clear already but we'll go over it one more time—that you've written about what you call the "archaic revival." I was going to ask you how does that fit in with technology and the idea of progress?

T: My notion of where this could all lead if everything was managed right is to a world that looks very much to the exterior observer the way the world must have looked 15,000 years ago.

In other words, a very low level of visible technology, people living tribally in many kinds of ecosystems and environments, but—and the "but" is very important—when you translate your point of view from the outside of the situation into the inside, and look at the world through the eyes of these future people, you discover menus hanging in space behind closed eyelids. In other words, the entire material culture could be interiorized. It isn't necessary to own large numbers of things, and build very large, complex physical cities.

What we need to do is to limit our population, and integrate ourselves into the natural ecosystem.

My political program for the future is pretty simple, and I don't know whether it would be called right wing, left wing, or what. But I've noticed that if each human being would parent only one child, the population of the planet would drop fifty percent in thirty years. In the next thirty years, it would drop fifty percent again. And so on.

You do that for one hundred years, and the major political debate that everybody's interested in is: "Are there enough people in the world?"

I think that is what we must do. Every man, every woman should parent only one child; this is the greatest political act we can do for the human community and the planet.

You know the only place it's been tried is in China, which is not where it is most likely to succeed. We need to say to the women of the high-tech industrial democracies: "If you will parent one child, you will have increased leisure time, you will have greater earning power, more expendable income, and you will be a genuine hero. Not a false hero, a genuine hero."

We have to give people the idea that this is a good thing. I have heard all kinds of objections.

I'm very interested in talking to young people mostly about psychedelics.

Most people my own age—I'm fifty —have either long ago embraced psychedelics or long ago decided it wasn't for them. But there are numbers of kids—people between eighteen and twenty-five who are coming up in an even more compromised and distorted situation than I grew up in, who need information about psychedelics.

I'm very excited, for instance, by things like *Salvia divinorum*. It's legal; it is not chemically similar to any presently scheduled compound; it has a history of religious usage; and it can be grown easily in most parts of the world.

I think we need to endlessly promote and bring forth things like this. New sources of the psychedelic experience. New chemical families. New botanical species.

And to make it clear to the establishment that there is no way this can be legislated out of existence, or controlled, or propagandized to silence. We are here to stay.

The psychedelics represent the unbroken thread of gnosis, back to the original human world before history. And I will promote that message as long as there is breath in my body. Because I think people need to hear it.

You know, there are different things going on in the politics of drugs. A lot of people think that the medical marijuana thing is a great thing. Well, on one level it is a great thing. But on the other hand, I don't want to trade the cops and judges in for doctors and hospital administrators. I don't want anybody making these decisions for me.

And then there's another group of people who want the concept of "recreational drugs" to be accepted by society. Well, that's fine. But that implies that all drugs are recreational. They are not. I am not willing to be granted legalization because the establishment finally decided what I was doing was trivial.

These things are not trivial. So talking about recreational drug use and legalizing drugs that can be confined in that category—that's not good enough either.

We have to actually confront that these things are transformative.

B: I wrote an essay called "Why We Get High." I played on the word "recreational," though I used Peter Stafford's term "re-creational."

T: Much better!

B: And the idea that the ultimate purpose of psychedelics might be considered re-creational in the sense that we re-create ourselves. They allow us to play in the way that children play, in the sense that they free us up from the stultified adult—"adult" being the past participle of the verb "to grow."

I had a biology professor who said that humans should be better called *Homo ludens* than *Homo sapiens*, because "*Homo ludens*" means "playful man," and humans play longer than any other species—except maybe for

dolphins—because dolphins and humans learn from that play. So "recreational" and "play" are part of it.

But the term "recreational" is pejorative in the sense that people think of it in the same way as—you know, go to a bar on Saturday night.

T: Right. It trivializes it in the minds of most people.

I agree with you. Adulthood seems to be a freezing of the reflex to play. And then one is forever caught where one was standing at age twenty-five when one suddenly became intellectually and esthetically constipated.

B: Right. And later a lot of the psychologists like Maslow and Jung said that the purpose of our whole life is to keep growing with self-actualization and self-realization. You know, in the earlier stages of the Freudianism there is a place where it all ends according to conventional psychology. But in the new psychology, we constantly grow.

T: That's right. Human life that isn't growing is human life that is dying.

B: Exactly!

One last question here. Aldous Huxley wrote *Island* about a third of a century ago. I've been working on a project—the Island Foundation —, which has as one of its purposes to link what you could call "the usual suspects" inspired by the psychotropics. We plan eventually to attempt to create a model psychedelic culture, a meme somewhere in the southern hemisphere, where we can start playing with some of these ideas—a place free from the political constraints that we have here in the good ol' USA and the northern hemisphere.

What do you think about Island Foundation and some of our plans?

T: As long as we are only a dissonant minority inside the belly of the beast, we basically represent a critique of that beast, but nothing more. I think it would be a fantastic thing to attempt on an island or somewhere remote to actually experiment with the lessons of psychedelics, with the insights of psychedelics, and I also predict that this would be perceived as a new level of threat by the establishment. Because, in a sense, that's what happened in the Haight-Ashbury in the '60s. Not on an island, and that was part of the problem. But it certainly was perceived as a threat by ordinary establishment organizations.

But this has to be done. We have to move beyond oligarchy, capitalism, consumerism, and mass media.

B: You know, I was fairly close friends with Tim Leary, and he had a great deal of faith in these multi-national corporations. He felt that at a certain point there was a critical mass that had turned on, and that the psychedelics would touch everywhere, and transform even the multi-nation-

als. But there's some skepticism on my part about all of that.

I think that there has to be some kind of alternative—a new vision that replaces this idea of transactions as the basis of human interaction, which even the most regressive seem to cultivate.

T: Well, it's interesting that you mentioned this. I think that we are going through a transition analogous to a transition that happened early in the seventeenth century. At the beginning of the Thirty Years War, Europe was ruled by popes and kings. At the end of the Thirty Years War, it was ruled by parliaments and peoples. The church was told by national governments: "We will now take over the reins of the money-making enterprise. You feed the poor, bury the dead, and provide spiritual counsel."

Now the corporations are saying to those same national entities: "Now you feed the poor, bury the dead, keep the roads repaired, and clear the swamps. Meanwhile, we will take over the money-making enterprise."

But there are certain things about the world corporate state, as I call it, that I think are to be at least temporarily preferred over the old way of doing business. The first is that war is an instrument of national policy. It is not an instrument of corporate policy. Corporations do not like war because by and large it is bad for business. It's not bad for the corporations building weapons, but most corporations don't build weapons. What capitalism likes is well-fed, hard-working, well-paid populations that do a lot of television watching and mall strolling.

The other thing is that corporations do not like are unregulated markets. This will work in favor of drug legalization, if that's what we want. In other words, corporations do not have moral agendas. Illegal drugs were almost a necessary part of the tool box of the nation-state because that's where it raised its black capital and did the back-channel business of funding its intelligence agencies and that sort of thing. But unregulated markets are anathema to the world corporate state, and so I think we will eventually see—because of that—the legalization of all drugs.

Nevertheless, at the center of the world corporate state is a very bad policy or way of doing business, and that is the idea of the sale of commodities. That somehow raw materials must be fashioned into objects of greater worth and then sold through a market economy. If this is allowed to continue uncritiqued, every forest will be cut, all metals will be extracted, all watersheds will be polluted.

So likely we are going to see a movement toward virtual products and virtual markets. In other words, if what a corporation sells you is clip art, very few rain forests are cut down to support that. If what they sell you are game environments—again these are environmentally-friendly things. But if capitalism continues to insist on dealing true things, then it will cut its own throat and will be replaced by something else.

At this point, I can't quite see what the "something else" will be. I am encouraged by the fact that though American capitalism is basically slash-

and-burn capitalism, companies like Fujitsu—which, interestingly, has a big stake in virtual reality—they have a 500-year plan for the company.

You know, American corporations don't plan beyond the next quarter. So if capitalism can tame its wilder tendency—the slash-and-burn tendency—then it may have a certain longevity as a social system. If it cannot tame that tendency, then it will consume itself along with everything else in the next fifty years.

B: I think that we have gotten near the end. Is there anything more that you want to say to our readers? Or do you want to put a cap on it here?

T: I would just say that I want to make it explicitly clear that I am very optimistic about the human future, about the role of psychedelic substances—both plants and products of the laboratory—in the human future. I think we stand at the brink of the great, great adventure.

I went out last night and looked at the comet. We've been having a lot of overcast here, so it was the first time I had seen it, and it was so clear to me, looking at that thing, that above the chatter of argument about 2012 and legalize this and that, and is Terence McKenna full of shit, and so forth and so on, all of these discussions, it is very clear to me that we have arrived at the final act of the human drama on this planet.

It isn't the end of the human drama. We have outlived this embryo, this human cradle, and now it's time to be up and about the great business of becoming citizens of the galaxy and at home with our own heart.

Psychedelics are Entheogens

by Julian Palmer

An often quoted understanding contends that from between 1% to 33% of the capacity of the human brain is presently active. In my exploration of the whole human being, I have clearly understood that the human body and brain are basically not operational in their correct and essential functionality. The brain and body are then understood to be operating on the basis of created "programs" of existence which mostly prevent the living of the true potential and livingness of the human organism.

When a psychedelic substance is ingested, the induced state appears to directly remind and render the brain and body into a state concordant to its true functionality and inherent free Life state. A basic testament to this understanding is that a whole psychedelic state is generally experienced by most to be a more real and essential space of livingness than our usual day to day state of consciousness.

From this perception, the human being is not then simply understood to be unevolved (although that is of course a valid perception); it is that the human being is actually not functioning according to its essential program, or operating system, which is inherently prior, and not an evolutionary potential. The human being is in most aspects, not living in alignment with the primary information of fullness, which is the light of all, always concurrently known in the space of nothing emptiness, which defines and demonstrates all information. This co-ordinated yin and yang, are in fact the essence of a "digital" or binary reality which delineates a free program of existence. Human beings now live only at a base level of blinkered structured and systemized programming, to carry out functionality fundamentally at the level of survival—sex, food, money, power—with all the presently possible abstractions, behaviors, and mediations of experience.

Most religious understandings (programs in and of themselves!) support this perception of the present human state being "fallen," in "sin" or apart from the creator and the original instructions of the creator. And religions can be understood from this perspective as remedial attempts to direct, mediate, and connect the human being to an essential greater reality.

An understanding of human physiology centrally demonstrates that the human brain and nervous system operate largely via serotonin, (5-hydroxytryptamine) co-ordinated with associated tryptamines. The most powerful psychedelic in terms of dosage to effect ratio, LSD (Lysergic Acid Diethylamide) appears to unlock and open neurotransmitter pathways, to allow more serotonin, tryptamines and other brain chemicals to flow through the brain, awakening potentials and parts of the brain previously not utilized.

Psilocybin, the active agent of "Magic Mushrooms" is a tryptamine,

when ingested, basically potentiates a greater brain function. DMT (n,n,dimethyltryptamine) and 5-MEO-DMT (5-methoxy-dimethyltryptamine) naturally occur within the human brain/body system. Naturally occurring phenethylamines like mescaline and synthetic phenethylamines such as MDMA, 2CB and 2C-T-7, are modifications of chemicals the body creates when one is in a state of love. However, little is scientifically known about the meaning and function of phenethylamines within the human body.

It is then understood that the basis of our most common and powerful psychedelic experiences occur via phenethylamines and tryptamines: chemicals already generated within the body, and thus must have a function and meaning within the overall scheme of the body. Certainly, their powerful effects, when ingested, would appear to indicate these original substances are vital to the functionality of the overall organism.

The pineal gland observed in most people is a small pea shaped, calcified structure located within the brain, behind the third eye. Some prophesize that in the actualized human potential, the pineal gland becomes the size of an eyeball. The perceived generative and secretive capacity of a gland that large obviously cannot be underestimated! The psychological and physical consequences of a brain continually generating large amounts of tryptamines and phenethylamines (and other chemicals), utilized by the brain and body is immense and brings us to understand a potential of awakening and consciousness only known to us in peak experiences or when we ingest psychedelics.

In the beginnings of western psychedelic research, many of the researchers came from a perspective that the substances induced a form of psychosis similar to "schizophrenia." Most of the general psychiatric, scientific and mainstream communities still subscribe to this understanding. For those who have seriously explored the spectrum of human use of natural and artificial psychedelics, such a perception is anathema to the innate human intelligence, creativity and reality expansion experienced in such a state.

Psycho-therapeutic uses of psychedelics has a history of over 50 years and is quite well established in the ways and means of treatment. Shamanic contexts of psychedelic use, utilizing tools such as ritual, song, dance and healing have occurred for thousands of years in countries such as South America and Africa, and the integration of these ways into the west has been happening for some time now as well.

The way I work with the state of awareness induced by the entheogenic substances is to actively engage in bringing the applications of light and information into the human bio-computer. Involved in this approach is the alchemical transmutation of the present programming in its many different levels: emotional, mental, archetypal and higher dimensional; to their essential purity and focus.

For myself, this work usually involves entering into a state of totality, or unity with this present creation; and the listening to the primary impulses,

signals and states that arise within my perceptual field. This allows intelligent communion with many life aspects, often bringing them into correct relationship with their related and connected alignment potentialities and essential focuses. I work with dispelling and dissolving the conglomerated fragments and "loops" or blocks which prevent the unobstructed flow of light and intelligence. This can occur via direct communion with others not physically present to myself, which I found a very natural and simple space to enter in, with certain knowledge of human interconnectivity and unity. Telepathy implies duality, and true telepathy occurs in the understanding that the mind is already melded!

Certainly, I have experienced many different aspects of "reality" which I would not even begin to be able to explain in terms that would somehow capture or categorize these experiences of "reality." And many of these experiences have brought me to experience realities much more real and coherent than this one! In the face of such experiential realities, I am more likely to experience this reality as a hallucination and dream than the other realities. And of course, this perspective is in accordance with many traditional eastern perspectives which consider this world to be somehow objectified as "maya" (illusionary creation) or "lila" (cosmic play).

In the 1960s, when psychedelic use entered into the mainstream consciousness of western countries, the typical transcendental experience involved an understanding of the unity of humanity, and that what we experienced as love was the primal force that moves all things. The typical so-called "hippie," having experienced such a state of understanding antithetical to a systemized, sterile western culture, often attempted to create ways in which the simplicities and various creativities of human life could be enjoyed and experienced.

The experience of egolessness, love and unity however, generally wears off with the effect of the substance; which holds the matrix to allow the generation of such an experience. The effort to create such a day to day experience via communities or specific practices have been sporadic and fraught with many of the problems that generally occur within mainstream lifestyles.

The capacity of the brain and body in focussed creation and secretion of substance is our inheritance. And to be brought to that point of empowerment, the plants and chemicals we use and create can be used to allow all aspects of ourselves into balance and essential power: arising from the central power from which all creation adores.

And yet, to be awakened within a malfunctioning operating system can be a difficult task, attested by those who experience sudden "kundalini" awakening of the psycho-physical circuitry of the body. The state of totality and unity in poetry's motion requires a creativity and application of entelechy not inherited from our eastern inheritance of reductionistic modes of spirit surrender, love and devotion, yogic means to achieving these states, nor from the subservient and rote based separative rituals of western exo-

teric religion. The convergence of minds and free mobius weaving is then called upon to bring together religion's hollows, and to allow our roots to know their love of gaia and our true free ways.

The inducement of a state akin to our priori natural state can then be perceived as entirely useful. Firstly, to awaken the human organism to the possible. Secondly, to perceive and learn to contact forms of intelligence. Thirdly, to balance and heal, and interweave the intelligence into coherence and contingency. And then to understand and expressively live the characteristics of the free and natural human.

Such usage of psychedelics can be perceived to pose a direct threat to the way we all direct, focus and manifest life energy into work and relationships with others. Deconstruction of linear and outdated information systems of constructed thought processes and belief systems must occur before there is significant reception and cognition of the intelligence arising from its essential source. And this process does not aim to bring about a diffuse spiritual melding, but to allow human operation from highly particularized spaces which allows digitalized forms of cybernetic focus; transcending earth computational technology by quantum miles.

Deeper listening automatically inherits a deeper speaking, and a more expanded reception and capacity potentiates the wider transmission of free intelligence and life forms. This discovery process requires a truly free space where no priori mental forms are introduced into the equation. When previous ways of being are in any way directing a desired outcome, such as in shamanic or psychotherapeutic work, the determinations of a desired reality have already been defined, and this approach can clearly prevent the creation of a fresh and free reality.

In a certain free and open space, often brought about with psychedelics, determinations of outcome and context can appear ridiculous, ludicrous and even mad. In fact, in certain states of unbound and yet focused vision, all our ways and measurements can appear to be futile attempts of mundane and transcendental reality unlivable via untenable means.

The original ways and means of being (before our cultural, religious and societal programming) are present within the overall human mechanism. The technologies which appear to be "outside" the physical form (but are in fact outside and inside and neither!) are the true involvement of the process of maintaining and manifesting human reality, and these form in their true state form and uniform an incredibly intricate and free game of Life play.

In the face of this understanding, in the facilitation of the ingestion of an entheogenic substance, the individual is not guided per se, or shown any particular way or means. Because their "way" and expression of that individualized uniqueness IS the subject and object to be explored and unfolded.

The role of an entheogenic facilitator in this context, then is neither to act as a mirror or instigator of input, but as an emphatic agent who appears in

the field of mutual being. Their role can be to express a concise and clear perception of the individual and where they are "AT" in their inner and outer landscape. The facilitator then acts and becomes a pure agent of this landscape.

Their role may involve forms of actual acting to a degree, to demonstrate or characteristically express an aspect of consciousness being that is not known, and yet preventing the further and wider view in its present state. This may involve accessing the same or equivalent spaces within oneself and contributing and understanding which may assist the unfoldment and growth of present intelligence. One may consciously become an instrument of aspects of consciousness in direct interaction and connectedness. One may be moved to direct oneself, and to relate or interplay in a certain way.

Immediately, it may be asked how far any power or introduction of elements is necessary. When the person is balancing their own elements to construct a coherent reality, then nothing is required but observation and non-interruptive presence. Only when an imbalance in psychological elements should arise, should the facilitator, in any way they feel to be most appropriate, push or pull the elements into a position in which the individual is empowered to work further. And it is beneficial to note, that in most realities, "work" is play.

If nothing else, the facilitation is a space of hearing and of living a mutual support of being, present if necessary. If there was nobody to hear, one would often be perceived to be "talking to oneself." And induced psychosis is certainly less acceptable than allowing an experiential reality (defined as hallucinated or not) to be witnessed.

An individual who ingests a potent psychedelic, and who has not, for whatever reason, truly penetrated beyond their own mental veils and explored their own depth and spaciousness, will often lock down into the subconscious will. This is because that is immediately where the spaces of neurosis or emotion exist which are preventing the individual from wholly sitting centrally in their being. Those who may appear to have advanced beyond structured systems are often those who have not been able to recognize or bring awareness to their essential actuality because of an inability to integrate and embody their own central ways and means of focussing intelligence through their own somatic and psychological structures. A potent psychedelic will often bring an individual into an often apparently intractable maze of somatic and psychological structures.

In this case, appropriate usage of phenethylamines like 2CB and MDMA can be very useful to separate the flotsam from the jetsam, clarifying and releasing that which is preventing co-ordinated being. MDMA can be used to expand the physiology to experience itself more wholly from the center or heart of itself, and 2CB can be effectively utilized to integrate and ground the aspects of being into whole and coherent physical awareness.

And there are other substances which appear more beneficial for certain aspects of exploration and clearing than others. Ketamine is an effective

way for many to overcome the fear of "other" realities and essentially themselves in broader contexts not limited to the usual body/mind parameters.

Psilocybin mushrooms in small to medium doses can allow much seeing beyond the parameter of one's own mental patterns and emotions. LSD can be utilized similarly, though the quality of street LSD is a concern in most parts of the world. Mescaline, in San Pedro or Peyote, is also a standard substance of self expansion.

Salvia Divinorum and its unique gifts is discovered by the individual via their experiences and communications with "Ska Pastora."

DMT or 5-MEO-DMT, vaporized in small doses, can be useful in opening the brain and physiology to visionary and essential life information.

DMT, smoked in larger doses beyond the "threshold," is well known to be the most effective way to experience overall consciousness in a total sense. Yet, the "higher" level experiences of comprehensive experiential existence is generally not integratable in ways that we know, and yet these space are often a good reference point of experience for human awareness to understand itself.

Ayahuasca, or Ayahuasca analogues utilising synthetic DMT, Acacia, Phalaris grass or any number of natural sources, with an MAO inhibitor like Syriun Rue or the pharmaceutical Moclebemide, is generally known to be the most effective way to integrate and open to work and communicate with different realities in an expansive and empowering way. Ayahuasca can also be effectively used for deep personal, emotional and spiritual healing. And yet, I feel that its greatest gift is in the "awakening" and actualising of the human in the essence of its being.

From a traditional "spiritual" perspective, the views on psychedelics differ. Certainly, the clean cut mainstream proscriptions of self help, psychology and spiritual information have no particular entry point in their communications for entheogens. The eastern gurus have generally stated that "the drugs" could often get you somewhere...but in and of themselves, are not a way to stay there. Which is certainly a valid perception, in response to those who believe the psychedelic state is The Answer. Any proponent of any substance or psychedelics in general, has to face this basic understanding. And yet, that altered states and shamanism is dependant on substance is simply not consistent with the reality of many on this planet.

Barbara Ann Brenann's now classic book "Hands of Light," approaching spiritual healing from a scientific based view of reality, describes a patient who took MDMA in the days preceding the healing, which had the effect of clearing and opening an aspects of his pineal gland and third eye. She says that usually MDMA has a somewhat detrimental effect on the auric field. Her philosophy of substance is "the right substance at the right time in the right dosage." This book also shows a picture of a man who has taken "too many LSD trips"(!) with a cloggy green auric field.

The body is not generally damaged by a one time use of any particular psychedelic substance at usual dosages. Very clearly, repeated and intensi-

fied usage stresses the body and the physiology with many substances. Then again, I have met those who have taken ayahuasca most every day for three months, and experientially found no negative consequences. Most everyone has met "acid casualties," and also those people who can appear to eat LSD like it is their daily bread with no apparent mental or spiritual difficulties. It appears this matter is often one of physiology and the overall state of the particular person. With what could be termed "entelechy medicine," so much work in consciousness can occur, that the "side effects" in comparison can be considered to be just that, effects occurring to the side of the central effects.

The two biggest issues preventing a serious exploration of the whole world culture with entheogens is the illegality of most all of these substances, and the propaganda of western countries that "drugs are bad" and the subsequent blanket "war against drugs."

Most people either see drugs as substances to heal the body, or to "get out of it." The administration of drugs to get in the body and activate the human mechanism is certainly alien to the prescriptions and abuses of DRUGS. Still a confronting issue for most living in the west, is that entheogens can actually show us the potential of the mind and human being. These substances when used, often demonstrate how little we know about the mind and the human being. This information is clearly threatening to a reductionist medical and scientific establishment, set in certain established routines, methods and protocols which generally well suit present understandings.

Pristine realities of total clarity and experience, then, are tended by those utilising a scientific or medical approach, to be regarded as hallucinations or as somehow unreal, as if reality were a fixed objectified determination already claimed and held within fixed frameworks of experience. These experiences often do not fit into scientific or mainstream understandings about what life is and how we must determine it to be to maintain our consensus view of reality and thus of our control our ability to live within it.

Clearly, the general public are only generally aware of the massive drug ABUSE that does occur, of psychedelic tripping away and falling over ones boundaries and of "ecstasy" fuelled dance parties. Serious exploration is relatively rare, mostly because the focus or intent in usage has not been generally established, or that a collective and seriously established movement has not been generated.

I feel that a movement to decriminalize naturally occurring psychedelics is a good first step. To bring information to ignorance, and demonstrate the worth and use of these substances, underground and above ground where possible.

It does seem ridiculous, that by drinking a "billy tea" with DMT containing Acacia leaves (Australia's most common tree species) is an illegal offence. What useful enforcement and control can be placed on such activities? Certainly, most who engage in this activity are highly conscientious and aware individuals with a good understanding of the profound effects of

such an ingestion. Those who are not are generally quickly scared away. DMT as a substance, is known to have the least potential for abuse and "addiction," because the experiences potentiates a certain "spiritual" responsibility and self correction, or else does not bring a desirable experience.

The simple fact of decriminalisation will open up many avenues of exploration. However, much underground work is required by a diverse range of people to establish more groundwork, and to truly legitimize the utilization of the substances and "medicines" of the mind, found in nature and created by man. They are truly powerful tools, perhaps the most powerful we have, and as human beings, the only rational course we have is to learn how to truly utilize them.

The Good Friday Marsh Chapel Experiment

by Jeanne Malmgren
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So simple. So quick. It didn't exactly feel historic. Mike Young took the clear gel capsule that was handed to him and the paper cup full of juice. Down it went. In the windowless room around him, 19 other young men also swallowed pills, then settled back on beige vinyl couches. The mood was calm, but expectation hung heavy in the air. For 20 minutes the group chatted, laughed. And waited.

Next to Young was his best friend, Wayne. While they talked, the two eyed each other, watching for any sign the capsules were taking effect. They knew that half the pills given out were placebos. Their chances were 50-50. Please, Young thought, let me be one of the group who got the drug. Across the room, a clutch of doctors, psychiatrists and researchers looked on. Among them was Timothy Leary, Harvard psychology professor and high priest of the budding psychedelic scene.

It was the morning of April 20, 1962. Good Friday. Young was 23, a first-year divinity student at Andover Newton Theological School outside of Boston. He had come to that room in the basement of Marsh Chapel, on the campus of Boston University, to take part in what would become one of the most famous—and one of the last—large scale experiments in the effects of hallucinogenic drugs. All the participants were theological students. Half of them had just taken 30 milligrams of psilocybin, a hallucinogen extracted from mushrooms that produces vivid sensory images and distorted perception. The other 10 got a placebo.

While under the influence, the group participated in a Good Friday worship service. Afterward, they were interviewed in detail about their experiences. The study's findings about the ability of psychedelics to produce pseudo-mystical states were startling and largely positive, yet the experiment was the last of its kind. By 1970, possession of psilocybin, LSD and other psychoactive drugs was illegal. Harvard had fired Timothy Leary. The research ended and the war on drugs began....

Today, Mike Young is the Rev. Mike Young, pastor of the Unitarian Universalist Church in Tampa. He was one of the 10 who took psilocybin that Good Friday three decades ago. "Of course I remember it. All of it," he says. "Experiencing death is something you don't forget." Those wild and colorful seven hours showed him a new mode of perception that was nothing short of ecstatic. The drug trip helped solidify his career path in the ministry. And it conquered his fear of death. Young, now 55, graying and

bearded, is not a cheerleader for drug abuse. He has counseled drug abusers. He has seen how drugs can rip lives apart. He warned his own children about the dangers of recreational use. But he also learned enough through his own experience to know that some drugs, used judiciously, can open a door. He's convinced psychedelics can be powerful tools for personal growth, as long as they're used in carefully controlled situations, administered by professionals trained to handle problems.

That doesn't mean he's advising curious teens to Just Say Yes. "I'm not the least enthusiastic about recreational use of drugs," Young says. "I would not wish to see them made legally available on the streets because they are dangerous. They're powerful mind benders." Still, he thinks we might be overlooking something with our blanket condemnation of hallucinogenics. A handful of scientists agrees with him. One by one, in the last few years, they've stepped forward to declare their interest in psychedelic research. They think such drugs might be used to help heroin and cocaine addicts, terminally ill patients, post-traumatic stress sufferers and people in psychotherapy. They're encouraged by recent changes at the Food and Drug Administration. A new division of the FDA called Pilot Drug Evaluation has begun granting approval to proposed studies of the effects of psychedelics on humans. Several experiments began this year. Many of this new generation of researchers were in grade school when Leary and company experimented with hallucinogenics in the '60s. They're eager to reopen a field of research that was essentially shut down for 25 years. And they plan to go about it carefully this time. "We all have to be very cautious and conservative," said Dr. Charles Grob, a psychiatrist at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center and associate professor at UCLA School of Medicine. "It's very important not to make any unsubstantiated claims or to be anything but totally impartial." There are critics, but the opposition seems muted. Several psychiatrists have said hallucinogenics are too unpredictable to be of any real value, but they stop short of recommending that research be halted. In May, Grob began human studies with MDMA, a drug also called Ecstasy. Supporters say MDMA has potential for psychotherapy because it makes users feel sympathetic and communicative, without the hallucinations common in other psychedelics. After determining safe dosage levels and measuring the drug's biological effects, Grob hopes to try MDMA on terminally ill patients who have chronic pain and depression. His step-by-step plan is common among the new wave of researchers. They know they'll never get institutional approval or funding unless their studies have solid medical foundations.

From his vantage point, spanning two generations of drug studies, Timothy Leary, now 74, watches the revival of psychedelic research and questions the notion it ever stopped. "A 'resurgence!'" he said by telephone recently from his Beverly Hills, Calif., home. "That's media-generated. This research has been going on the whole time." He's right, technically. A few drug researchers went underground in the '70s, backed by whatever private funding they could scrounge and supplied by drug manufacturers abroad. Psy-

chedelic drug studies may never be commonplace or widely accepted, Leary acknowledges. He calls the concept of federally approved experiments in expanded consciousness “the ultimate oxymoron.”

Science meets religion

The Good Friday experiment was the very blending of science and religion that today might raise eyebrows. Mike Young and the other volunteers passed a thorough physical/psychological screening conducted by Leary, his associate Richard Alpert (who later became known as Ram Dass) and Walter Pahnke, the author of the study. Pahnke was a physician and minister working on his Ph.D. in theology at Harvard. His hypothesis was that a psychedelic drug could induce something similar to a mystical experience, when taken in a religious atmosphere by a group of subjects who were spiritually inclined. Leary had already tried it on state prison inmates and Pahnke wanted to use divinity students next. He designed a double-blind study in which neither the experimenters nor the subjects would know who had gotten the drug and who hadn't, at least until it became obvious by their behavior. He chose his 20 participants, assigned each a code name and recruited Harvard graduate students to act as “guides.” As the organ swung into a prelude upstairs in the sanctuary, Young and his friends, in the basement lounge, waited for whatever might happen. “I noticed Wayne was antsy,” Young remembers. “Pretty soon his face got all flushed and he said, ‘It’s hot in here.’ I was having no symptoms at all. So I thought, ‘s—, he got the drug and I got the placebo.’ Dammit, anyway.” Actually, it was the other way around. Young’s friend was reacting to the placebo—a large dose of niacin, part of the Vitamin B complex. Young’s symptoms started as his friend’s subsided. “I just slid into it very gently, very, very beautifully,” he says. “Colors became incredibly intense. Geometric figures seemed to etch themselves around objects. When somebody moved there was an after-image, a flare behind the motion.” Before long the light show became internal, as well. Young closed his eyes and “leapt into an incredible kaleidoscope of visual wonderment.”

By the time he realized he was beginning his drug trip, the worship service had begun and the group was ushered into a small chapel across the hall. They sat in pews facing an empty pulpit and altar. The rich voice of the Rev. Howard Thurman, chaplain of Boston University and mentor of young divinity student Martin Luther King, Jr., rolled down from a pair of speakers at the front of the chapel. Thurman’s 2 1/2-hour Good Friday meditation was legendary. Intensely emotional, the service contained poetry, homily, scripture readings and music, interweaving events from the life of Christ with his Passion on the cross. As Thurman recited poetry—mostly dark, moody pieces about death—Young sat in the pew and listened. At one point, he went to the men’s room and began hallucinating: Cigarette ashes in the urinal looked like beautiful black pearls. Through an open win-

dow in the bathroom, he heard cars whizzing by. “And I didn’t know which was the real world. I couldn’t keep straight what was happening inside my head and what was happening outside.”

Ego death

Young went back in the chapel and within minutes was plunged into what he now calls “the major vision of the drug for me.” It began with more visual fireworks. “I was awash in a sea of color. These bands of swooshing liquid. It was like being underwater in an ocean of different color bands.” Overwhelmed, he tried to make sense of what he was seeing. “Sometimes, it would resolve into patterns with meaning, and other times it would just be this beautiful swirl of color. It was by turns threatening and awe-inspiring. “Thirty-two years later, Young leans forward in his chair as he describes the vision. Eventually—he has no idea how much time this took—the colors began to take recognizable shape. “It was a radial design, like a mandala, with the colors in the center leading out to the sides, each one a different color and pattern.” Young felt that he was in the center of this great circle—frozen there like a fly in a spider web. “I could see that each color band was a different life experience. A different path to take. And I was in the center where they all started. I could choose any path I wanted. It was incredible freedom . . . but I had to choose one. To stay in the center was to die.” Young’s voice drops to a whisper. “I couldn’t choose. I just . . . couldn’t. . . pick one.” He was in agony. There was a sensation of his “insides being clawed out. It was incredibly painful.” For what felt like an eternity, he hung there, suspended by fear and indecision. “And then I died.”

At that moment, Thurman’s voice, from upstairs in the sanctuary, intoned the lines of an Edna St. Vincent Millay poem.

*Death shall die, but that is all I shall do for
I am not on his pay-roll.*

Young pulled a scrap of paper out of his pocket and scribbled something on it. Later that day, when his head was clear, he looked at what he’d written. NOBODY SHOULD HAVE TO GO THROUGH THIS. EVER! “I wasn’t talking about the drug trip,” he says now. “I was talking about having to make this choice of what to be. I was talking about having an ego and having to have it die in order to live in freedom. I had to die in order to become who I could be. I did make a choice, in that willingness to die.”

Coming down

Young spent three more hours under the influence of psilocybin. “I was in and out of vision, but it was pleasant. Interesting. It gradually tapered off. I was gently coming down and reflecting back on that death image.” Eventu-

ally, he started to notice what was going on around him. Most of the nine others who had taken the drug were still sitting on pews in the chapel. There was not a lot of rolling around on the floor or other dramatics, Young says. One man got up and gave a "sermon," a string of gibberish. Another stood and almost urinated before he realized what he was doing. One man felt compelled to find out if the outside world was still there. He was found trying to force the lock on a door. Two guides walked him around outside, but couldn't calm him. Eventually, he was given a shot of Thorazine, a powerful tranquilizer. At the end of the day, all 20 men filled out a questionnaire and wrote a complete chronology of their experience. Afterward, they went to Leary's house, where they devoured sandwiches and sodas. There were follow-up interviews and medical and psychiatric exams a month later, and again at six months. And then it was over.

Young never heard from Pahnke, the head researcher, again. He finished divinity school, spent several years as campus minister at Stanford University and assistant pastor of a Unitarian Universalist church in Palo Alto, both in California. He also designed rehab programs for young offenders at the Los Angeles probation department before coming to Tampa in 1982 to lead the Unitarian church here. There were never any flashbacks. But Young has had two related experiences in the years since. First was a dream in which he saw the circular design of his drug trip, which he now understands was all about his struggle to make a career choice. The second experience came as he stood on a California beach, watching a storm build out at sea and feeling a deep sense of connection with the Earth. He interpreted both as spontaneous expressions of what the psilocybin had taught him during the drug trip. "Religious ideas that were interesting intellectually before, took on a whole different dimension. Now they were connected to something much deeper than belief and theory."

Similar beliefs

In 1988, Young found out it was the same way for most of the other Good Friday participants. Rick Doblin, a psychology student at New College in Sarasota, called him. Doblin wanted to do a 25-year follow-up study, but Pahnke had died in a scuba accident several years after the experiment. Many of his records had been lost. Young helped Doblin crack the code names and he tracked down all but two of the Good Friday participants. One had died and one never was located. Two others didn't want to talk about it. The result of Doblin's interviews is the final chapter of the Good Friday story. His report was published in the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*. "Everyone I talked to who had the psilocybin felt after 25 years of reflection that the experience was a genuine mystical experience," Doblin says. "It was a clear viewing of some ultimate level of reality that had a long-term positive impact on their lives." Although many of the subjects endured frightening or painful moments during their drug trip, as Young did, they still

felt it was worthwhile. Quite a few reported later mystical experiences, either in dreams, prayer or natural settings. "The primary feeling of unity from their drug trip led many of them to a feeling of compassion for oppressed minorities and the environment," Doblin says.

Young told his Tampa congregation about the Good Friday experiment several years ago, in a sermon. Only one woman voiced mild objection; most were interested to hear the tale. "What the drug experience did for me involved a deepening of my own spiritual sense, along with a broadening of it," Young says. "It has influenced the whole context of my ministry." The majority of the Good Friday participants now favors limited, controlled use of hallucinogenics. At least two of the subjects who got the placebo in the experiment later arranged to take psilocybin on their own. Young and his wife, Nancy, an artist, have a grown daughter and son. They also reared 21 foster children part-time, including an Amerasian girl they adopted when she was 13. "My kids knew about my psilocybin experience as early as I can remember," Young says. "But they also saw their dad working as a probation officer with drug abusers. They saw very clearly how drugs could tear up their life. My approach always was, here's the best information available on drugs. Here are the risks involved. I trusted them to learn from life's lessons."

Drugs, to him, are tools—helpful when used properly, potentially lethal if used the wrong way. "A hatchet is a very useful tool but it's really lousy for parting your hair." Young is just as concerned as anyone else when he reads about middle-school kids turning on to psychedelics. "One of the great ironies is that this stuff is once again becoming available," he says. "You have people cooking up batches of LSD in their bathtubs and it's hitting the streets. It's there." What is not there, he adds, is "the wisdom of how to deal with this." And wisdom he knows, is more than just the contents of a gel capsule. It's the ability to understand whatever secrets that capsule may reveal.

LSD: Completely Personal

speech delivered to the 1996 Worlds of Consciousness Conference
in Heidelberg, Germany

Dr. Albert Hofmann

translated from the original German (*LSD Ganz Persönlich*) by J. Ott

One often asks oneself what roles planning and chance play in the realization of the most important events in our lives. With respect to a given event, this involves the question, just how much was destiny, how much free will? This question has preoccupied me again and again in relation to one of the most significant and consequential events in my life in relation to the discovery of LSD.

In order that this event might have occurred, the 'switches' must have been set in quite a specific direction at various points in my life. In deciding on my profession, I had to choose to become a chemist. This decision was not easy for me. I had already taken a Latin matricular exam, and therefore a career in the humanities stood out most prominently in the foreground. Moreover, an artistic career was tempting. In the end, however, it was a problem of theoretical knowledge which induced me to study chemistry, which was a great surprise to all who knew me.

Mystical experiences in childhood, in which Nature was altered in magical ways, had provoked questions concerning the essence of the external, material world, and chemistry was the scientific field which might afford insights into this.

A second, important decision on the fateful path to LSD was my choice of jobs. I chose the pharmaceutical-chemical research laboratories of the firm Sandoz Ltd. in Basel. What attracted me to this job was the research program undertaken by the laboratory director, Professor Arthur Stoll, on the advice of the famous Nobel Prize winner Professor Richard Willstutter; namely, the isolation and purification of the active principles of well-known medicinal plants, and their chemical modification. Here chemical research impinged on the life of the plant world, which doubly fascinated me. A further, wholly decisive "switch-setting" took place, after I had already been occupied for some years with cardioactive medicinal plants like *Digitalis* and *Mediterranean squill*, when I applied myself to research on ergot I still quite distinctly recall the deep feeling of fortune in expectation of the adventure of discovery promised by this still little researched field of study. This expectation was later amply fulfilled. Important medicaments derived from that research, whose absence from the medicinal treasury today is unimaginable: *Methergine*, the standard preparation for stanching of post-partum hemorrhage; *Dihydergot*, a circulatory stabilizing medicament; *Hydergine*, a geriatric medicine for treatment of infirmities of old age; and the psychopharmaka LSD and psilocybin. It is remarkable how clearly I remem-

ber the circumstances under which the idea of synthesizing the substance lysergic acid diethylamide came to me. At the time I did not take my midday meal in the company cafeteria, but instead remained in my laboratory during the midday break, and nourished myself on a slice of bread with honey and butter and a glass of milk, which was delivered fresh every morning from the Sandoz agricultural research farm. I had finished my delicious meal and was pacing back and forth, ruminating on my work. Suddenly there occurred to me the well-known circulatory stimulant *Coramin*, and the idea and possibility of synthesizing an analogous compound based on lysergic acid, which is the basic building block of ergot alkaloids. Chemically, *Coramin* is nicotinic acid diethylamide, and I analogously planned to synthesize lysergic acid diethylamide. The chemical-structural similarity of these two compounds led me to expect analogous pharmacological properties. With lysergic acid diethylamide I hoped to obtain a novel, improved circulatory stimulant. The first synthesis of lysergsaure-diethylamid [or LSD, whose acronym derives from the initials of the German name, *Trans.*] is described in my laboratory notebook under the date 16 November 1938.¹ This substance lysergic acid diethylamide, which has become world-famous under the designation LSD, was thus the product of rational planning. Chance first came into play later.

The novel compound came under routine pharmacological investigation in the biological-medicinal laboratory. In the research report, apart from a strong activity on the uterus and the evoking of a certain restlessness in the research animals during the narcosis, no properties were mentioned which might have pointed to a *Coramin*-like effect on circulation. The novel substance lysergic acid diethylamide appeared to be pharmacologically uninteresting, and underwent no further tests.

Yet five years later, once again during a creative midday break, the idea came to me in a strange way, again to synthesize lysergic acid diethylamide for further pharmacological testing. It was no more than a hunch! I liked the chemical structure of the substance—which led me to take this unusual step, since compounds as a rule were never handled again, when once discarded.

During the new repetition of the synthesis of lysergic acid diethylamide, a repetition, so to speak, grounded on a hunch, chance had the opportunity to come into play. At the conclusion of the synthesis, I was overtaken by a very weird state of consciousness, which today one might call "psychedelic." Although I was accustomed to scrupulously clean work, a trace of the substance must accidentally have entered my body, probably during the purification via recrystallization. In order to test this supposition, I made the first planned self-experiment with LSD three days later, on 19 April 1943. It was a horror trip. The details have already been described so many times, that they can be foregone here.

Considered from a personal perspective, the psychedelic effect of lysergic acid diethylamide would not have been discovered without the interven-

tion of chance. Like many tens of thousands of substances annually synthesized and tested in pharmaceutical research, then found to be inactive, the compound might have disappeared into oblivion, and there would have been no history of LSD. However, considering the discovery of LSD in the context of other significant discoveries of our time in the medicinal and technical field, one might arrive at the notion that LSD did not come into the world accidentally, but was rather evoked in the scope of some higher plan. In the 1940s the tranquilizers were discovered, a sensation for psychiatry. These constitute the precise pharmacological antipodes of LSD. As indicated by their name, they tranquilize and cover-up psychic problems; while LSD reveals them, thus making them accessible to therapeutic treatment. At about the same time nuclear energy became technically usable and the atomic bomb was developed. In comparison to traditional energy sources and weapons, a new dimension of menace and destruction became accessible. This corresponded to the potency-enhancement realized in the field of psychopharmaka, something like 1:5000 or 1:10,000-fold, comparing mescaline to LSD.

One could make the assumption that this coincidence might not be accidental, but rather was brought on the scene by the "Spirit of the Age." From this perspective the discovery of LSD could hardly be an accident.

One might reflect on a further idea, that LSD might have been predestined by some higher power to arise precisely at the time when the predominance of materialism with all its consequences over the past 100 years was being understood. LSD as an enlightening psychopharmakon along the path to a new, spiritual age!

All of which could suggest that my decisions on arriving at the guiding "switch-points" which have led to LSD, were not really undertaken through exercise of free will, but rather steered by the subconscious, through which we are all connected with the universal, transpersonal consciousness.

But so much for the fateful aspect of LSD history, which has often engaged me mentally on to another chapter: LSD - completely personal. I should like to describe how, through LSD, I came directly or indirectly into personal relationship with two of the most important writers of our century, Aldous Huxley and Ernst Janger, and to explain their views on the significance of psychedelic drugs in our time.

I had read some of the world-famous books by the great English-American writer and philosopher Aldous Huxley; his futuristic vision *Brave New World*² and the social novel *Point Counter Point*.³ Especially meaningful for me were two books appearing in the 1950s, *The Doors of Perception*⁴ and *Heaven and Hell*,⁵ in which Huxley described his experiences with mescaline. Both books contain fundamental contemplations on the essence of visionary experience and on the meaning of this type of world-view in cultural history. Huxley saw the value of psychedelic drugs in offering the possibility of experiencing extraordinary states of consciousness to people who do not possess the talent for visionary experience, which is the province of mystics,

saints and great artists. For him these drugs were keys to allow the opening of new doors of perception; chemical keys beside other, proven but laborious "door openers" like meditation, solitude, fasting, or certain yoga practices.⁶

I gained a deeper insight and meaningful interpretation of my own LSD experiences from these two books by Huxley. I was therefore joyously surprised to receive a telephone call in the laboratory one morning in August 1961: "This is Aldous Huxley." He was passing through Zurich with his wife. He invited me and my wife to lunch in the Hotel Sonnenberg.

A gentleman with a yellow Fresa in his buttonhole, an exalted, noble appearance with a gentle radiance—thus I recall Aldous Huxley from this first meeting. The table conversation revolved mainly around the question of magic drugs. Both Huxley and his wife Laura also had had experiences with LSD and psilocybin. Huxley did not call either of these substances or mescaline "drugs," since "drug" in English usage, as likewise with *Droge* in German, possesses a pejorative sense, and because he felt it important semantically to distinguish this type of active substance from other drugs.

Huxley felt there was little sense in experiments with hallucinogens, as the psychedelica or entheogens were mostly known at the time, under laboratory conditions, since the surroundings were of crucial importance. He recommended to my wife, when the conversation turned to her Bundnerland mountain home, that she take LSD in an alpine meadow, then gaze into the blue corolla of a gentian flower, there to behold the wonder of creation.

As we were taking our leave, Huxley gave me, as a memento of this meeting, a tape of the lecture "Visionary Experience" which he had delivered the week before at a psychology conference in Copenhagen. In this lecture he discoursed on the essence and meaning of visionary experience and posited just such a world-view as a necessary supplement to the verbal and intellectual comprehension of reality.

During the following year a new, final book by Aldous Huxley appeared, the novel *Island*.⁷ In this book he described the attempt, on the utopian island Pala, to fuse science and technical civilization with eastern wisdom into a new culture, in which reason and mysticism are fruitfully united. A magical drug called the moksha-medicine, obtained from a mushroom (moksha in Sanskrit means dissolution, liberation), plays an important role in the life of the population of Pala. Its use is restricted to decisive periods of life. Young men on Pala employ it in initiatory rites; it is dispensed in the course of psychotherapeutic dialogue during life crises; and for the dying it facilitates the abandonment of this mortal coil and the passage to another being.

Huxley sent me a copy of this book with the handwritten entry: "To Albert Hofmann, the original discoverer of the moksha-medicine, from Aldous Huxley." In one of the letters which I received from him, dated 29 February 1962, there is a sentence that seems to comprise for me a particularly important admonition: "Essentially this is what must be developed: the art of

giving out in love and intelligence what is taken in from vision and the experience of self-transcendence and solidarity with the universe."

In late summer 1963 I was frequently in the company of Aldous Huxley in Stockholm at the annual meeting of the World Academy of Arts and Sciences. The progress of the negotiations in sessions of the Academy was imprinted by the content and form of his proposals and contributions to discussions. In keeping with the theme on which the conference was based, "World Resources," Huxley made the proposal of taking into consideration the subject of "Human Resources," the investigation and unfolding of capabilities innate in human beings, but unused. A humankind with highly-developed spiritual capacities, with expanded consciousness of the comprehensive wonder of being, would have to be more capable of observing and recognizing also the biological and material bases for its existence on this Earth. The development and unfolding of the ability sensually to experience reality directly, undisguised by words and concepts, would be of evolutionary significance, above all for Occidental humankind with such hypertrophied rationality. Huxley regarded the psychedelic drugs as an aid to training in this direction.

The English psychiatrist Humphry Osmond, who had coined the term psychedelic (mind-manifesting), was likewise taking part in the Congress, and supported Huxley with a report on meaningful possibilities of application of the psychedelica.

The symposium in Stockholm was my last meeting with Aldous Huxley. His appearance was already marked by his fatal disease, but his spiritual radiance remained undiminished. Aldous Huxley died on the 22nd of November 1963, the same day President Kennedy was assassinated. I received from Mrs. Laura Huxley a copy of her letter to Julian Huxley, in which she reported to her brother-in-law on the final day of her husband's life. The physicians had prepared her for a dramatic end, since in cancer of the esophagus, the terminal phase is usually accompanied by spasms and episodes of suffocation. He expired peacefully and quietly, however.

In the morning, when he was already so weak that he could no longer speak, he had written on a sheet of paper: "LSD-try it-intramuscular-100 mmg." Mrs. Huxley understood what he meant by this, and gave him the desired injection-she administered him the moksha-medicine. Mrs. Huxley also sent me a copy of this sheet of paper with the final handwriting expressing the last wish of this great man. Huxley had made personal use of what he had described in *Island*, application of the moksha-medicine as an aid to the great transition. His fervent mission on behalf of psychedelic drugs came to be resented, even by the majority of his friends and readers. Some say it cost him the Nobel Prize.

So much for Aldous Huxley; now for my relations with Ernst Jange! I read my first book by this author, his diary from the First World War, *In Stahlgewittern*,⁸ as required reading in officer's school at the end of the 1920s. The second book by this author, which I acquired later, *Das*

Abenteuerliche Herz,⁹ was a great surprise for me. How could the same author, who had described with thrilling, naked reality the horror of modern warfare in *In Stahlgewittern*, open the eyes of the reader with his prose, to the enchantment of simple things and the magic of everyday events? I still frequently pick up this book even after 50 years. Therein are descriptions of flowers, of animals, of dreams, of solitary walks; even thoughts on chance, on fortune, on colors and other themes which have a direct relationship to our personal lives. Here our eyes, which have become dulled by everyday habit, are again fully opened, and the omnipresent wonder, that is, the inexplicable, is made manifest in all its blessed, but sometimes even terrifying significance.

This reading often puts me in the mood to reflect on mystical experiences in childhood and on experiences with LSD inebriation. Jange's literary work has become a constant, spiritual companion in my life.

My personal relationship with Ernst Janger derived from a package of provisions such as one could send to the needy population of Germany after the war. The acknowledgement in July 1947 of one such package constituted the commencement of a correspondence continuing to this day.

At first the topic of this was not drugs. In order to explain how LSD came into play, I must speak of my first self-experiments with this substance. Shortly after my first planned self-experiment with LSD in April 1943, which led to the discovery of its fantastic psychic activity, the first clinical investigations with LSD on voluntary subjects were conducted by coworkers in the medicinal-biological department [of Sandoz, Trans.]. The frequently multi-year-long toxicological tests which today must precede the investigation of a substance in human beings were foregone. After all, I had already withstood quite a strong dose without damage. Doses employed here corresponded to only a fifth or a tenth of the quantity employed in my pioneering experiment, that is, to 0.05 or 0.025 milligrams. Understandably I myself participated in this research, which was conducted between work in the laboratory. Thus I experienced quite drastically, what a crucial meaning the external setting, the environment, had for psychedelic experiments. In alterations of consciousness induced by LSD I experienced directly the coldness and unpleasantness of the technical world surrounding me, and my colleagues in their white laboratory coats appeared to pursue a meaningless occupation; the apparatus and equipment had a diabolical aspect, like little monsters from the pictures of Hieronymus Bosch. Thereby an other, strange, dream-like world intruded upon me from within. The interruptions for the psychological tests, with which we sought to give such research a scientific character, were perceived as downright tormenting. I realized that one completely missed the meaning and essence of psychedelic experiences in such an external setting.

I longed further to pursue the investigation of the properties of LSD in a musical atmosphere, in lovely surroundings and in stimulating company. I thought at once of Ernst Janger. From our correspondence I knew that he

had already experimented with mescaline. He immediately agreed to my suggestion that we conduct an LSD experiment together.

The great adventure took place at the beginning of February 1951. In order to have medical assistance at hand in the event it were needed, I asked my friend and colleague, the pharmacologist Professor Heribert Konzett, to participate in our undertaking. The trip took place at ten o'clock in the morning in the living room of the house we had at the time in Bottmingen near Basel.

Since the reaction of such a highly sensitive man as Ernst Janger was not predictable, a low dose was employed as a precautionary measure for this first experiment, only 0.05 milligrams. The experiment thus did not lead into great depths.

The initial phase was characterized by an intensification of aesthetic experience. The red-violet roses which adorned the room, adopted an undreamed of luminous power and radiated in portentous splendor. The concerto for flute and harp by Mozart was perceived in all its celestial glory as heavenly music. In mutual astonishment we beheld the smoky haze which arose with the ease of thought from a Japanese incense stick.

As the inebriation became deeper and the conversation lapsed, fantastic reveries overtook us, as we lounged with closed eyes in our armchairs. Janger enjoyed the colored splendor of Oriental pictures; I was on a voyage with Berber tribes in North Africa, saw parti-colored caravans and lush oases. Konzett, whose features seemed transfigured Buddha-like, experienced a breath of timelessness, freedom from the past and the future, the blessing of being completely in the here and now.

This excursion was marked by the commonality and parallelness of our experiences, which we all perceived as deeply blessed. We had all three approached the portal to a mystical state of being; but the door had not opened. The dose selected had been too low. Misunderstanding this reason, Ernst Janger, who had been thrust into deeper domains with a high dose of mescaline, opined that: "Compared with the tiger mescaline, your LSD is really only a house cat." He revised this opinion after further experiences with higher doses of LSD. The above-mentioned spectacle with the incense stick has been treated in a literary fashion by Janger in his story *Besuch auf Godenholm*,¹⁰ in which he also plays with deeper experiences of drug inebriation. During the following years, I visited Ernst Janger often in Wilflingen, whence he had moved from Ravensburg, or we met in Switzerland, at my home in Bottmingen or in Bundnerland. Our relationship became closer through the shared LSD experience. In our conversations and correspondence, drugs and questions connected with them formed a main theme, without at first having proceeded again to practical experimentation.

Here I should like to cite two short extracts from our correspondence of that time. In my letter of 16 December 1961 I had allowed: A further disquieting thought which follows from the ability to influence the highest spiritual functions (consciousness) with minimal traces of a substance, involves free

will. Highly potent psychotropic substances like LSD and psilocybin possess in their chemical structures a very close relationship to natural bodily substances which occur in the brain and play an important role in the regulation of its functions. It is thus thinkable, that through some such disturbance in metabolism a compound of the type of LSD or psilocybin is formed in place of a normal neurotransmitter, which can alter and determine the character, the personality, its worldview and its actions. A trace of a substance, whose occurrence or non-occurrence in our bodies we cannot control with our wills, is capable of determining our fate. Such biochemical considerations might have led to the sentence written by Gottfried Benn in his essay *Provoziertes Leben*:¹¹ "God is a substance, a drug!" Standing out above all in the reply from Ernst Janger, in his letter of 27 December 1961, is: "we are beginning to develop procedures in biology, just like those in the field of physics, that can no longer be conceived of as progress in the established sense, but which rather intervene in evolution and lead beyond the development of the species. I suspect that this is a new era, that begins to work on the evolution of types. Our science with its theories and inventions is thereby not the cause, but rather one of the consequences of evolution! Wine has already altered much, has brought with it new gods and a new humanity. But wine stands in relation to the new substances like LSD, as classical to modern physics. These substances should be tried only in small groups. I cannot agree with the idea of Huxley's, that hereby the masses can be given possibilities for transcendence. This does not involve comforting fictions, but rather realities, if we take the matter seriously, and few contacts suffice to lay roads and connections." Janger here advocates the opinion that a new consciousness cannot be expanded through mass consumption of psychedelica, this must rather happen to an elite. We have since complemented such theoretical discussions on magical drugs with practical experiments. One such, which served for the comparison of LSD with psilocybin, took place in the spring of 1962. The following session happened in the Janger' house, in the erstwhile forester's home of the Stauffenberg's castle in Wilflingen.

Besides my above-mentioned friend, the pharmacologist Heribert Konzett, the Islamic scholar Rudolf Gelpke likewise took part in this psilocybin symposium. Gelpke had already made experiments with LSD and psilocybin obtained directly from Sandoz, which have been described under the title *On Travels in the Universe of the Soul*.¹²

It was mentioned in the ancient chronicles how the Aztecs drank cacahuatl or chocolate before they ate teonanacatl. In harmony with this Mrs. Liselotte Janger likewise served us hot chocolate. Then she abandoned the four psychonauts¹³ to their fate.

We were gathered in a massive living room with a dark wooden floor, white tile stove and period furniture. On the walls hung old French engravings, on the table stood a magnificent bouquet of tulips. Janger wore a long, broad, dark-blue-striped kaftan-like garment which he had brought from Egypt; Konzett was resplendent in a parti-colored Mandarin gown; Gelpke and I

had put on housecoats. The everyday should also be set aside even in the external sense. Shortly before sundown we took the drug, not the mushrooms but rather their active principle, 20 mg of psilocybin each. This corresponded to some two-thirds of the very strong dose which the famous curandera Maria Sabina was accustomed to take in the form of Psilocybe mushrooms.

After an hour I still felt only a slight effect, while my fellows were already deeply into the trip. I had the hope that in the mushroom inebriation it would be possible for me to allow again to become vivid certain images from moments in my childhood, which remained with me as blessed events in my memory: the meadow of flowers lightly stirred by the early summer wind; the rosebush after the thunderstorm in the evening light; or the blue irises over the vineyard wall. However I did not succeed with this willfully directed imagination. When the mushroom principle finally began to work, in place of these luminous images from my home country, weird scenery emerged. Half-stunned I sank ever deeper, passed through moribund cities with a Mexican character, of exotic, though deathly splendor. Terrified, I sought to hold myself on the surfaces, to concentrate consciously on the exterior world. I succeeded in this once in a while. Then I saw Janger colossal, pacing back and forth across the room; an enormous, mighty magician. Konzett in his silky, glistening house coat appeared to me to be a dangerous Chinese clown. Even Gelpke seemed eerie to me, long, thin, mysterious! The deeper I sank into the inebriation, the stranger everything became. The cities I traversed when I closed my eyes lay in a morbid light, weird, cold, senseless, empty of humanity. When I opened my eyes and sought to fasten myself onto the external world, even the surroundings seemed to me to be senseless, spectral. The total void threatened to plunge me into absolute nothingness. I remember how I grasped ahold of Gelpke's arm and held him to me when he passed by my chair, in order not to sink into dark nothingness. Fear of death seized me, and an endless yearning to return to the living creation, to the reality of the human world.

At last I came back to the room. I saw and heard the great magician lecture uninterruptedly with a loud voice, reporting on Schopenhauer, Kant, Hegel and the old Ga, the little mother. Gelpke and Konzett were already back on the Earth, on which I again set foot wearily.

It was past midnight, when we sat together at the table which the woman of the house had set on the upper floor. We celebrated our return with a sumptuous repast and Mozart's music. The conversation about our experiences lasted well into the morning.

The above-described research protocol was included in my LSD book, *LSD—My Problem Child*,¹⁴ published by Klett-Cotta in 1979 and reprinted in 1993, as a 50th anniversary celebration, in a DTV pocket book. Ernst Janger has described this symposium from his vantage point in his 1970 Klett book, *Annäherung—Drogen und Rausch*.¹⁵ The mushroom substance had conducted the four of us, not to the luminous heights, but to deeper regions.

Both are part of our existence. Only when we are conversant with both, heaven and hell, is our life full and rich; and it is fuller and richer the more deeply we experience both. The psychedelic experience can lead us to the deepest depths and the highest heights, to the boundaries of that which humankind is capable of experiencing. Janger gave his book on drugs and inebriation the title *Approaches*, approaches even to these boundaries, and he has also described himself as a "boundary walker" [Grenzgänger].¹⁶ He has repeatedly approached both boundaries: proximity to death in battle in the hell of modern warfare, and the ecstasy of the most exalted delight and love in the perception of the wonder and the beauty of creation.

In conclusion, just a small anecdote that connects me with Ernst Janger and LSD. Janger told me that a stranger once called him in the middle of the night and told him that now he finally knew what LSD meant. LSD means: love seeks you [Liebe sucht dich].

References and Translator's Notes

1. Although in 1993 there were extensive celebrations of the 50th anniversary of LSD, this was actually the 55th anniversary of its synthesis, and on 16 November 1998 we ought celebrate the 60th anniversary of its discovery. —Trans.
2. Huxley, A. (1932). *Brave New World*. New York: Harper.
3. Huxley, A. (1930). *Point Counter Point*. New York: Harper.
4. Huxley, A. (1954). *The Doors of Perception*. New York: Harper.
5. Huxley, A. (1955). *Heaven and Hell*. London: Chatto and Windus.
6. Whereas Huxley seemed to think the chemical keys to religious experiences were somehow inferior, citing De FZ~lice who called them "inferior forms of mysticism," the advancement in entheobotanical research since Huxley's day has put the shoe on the other foot. The work of Wasson, La Barre, Furst and others has shown clearly that modern religions derived from shamanism, whose essence is visionary experience primordially catalyzed by entheogenic plants. That entheogenic drugs evoke genuine religious experiences is beyond doubt, since the religions themselves derived from this. It is rather incumbent on proponents of artificial routes to ecstasy such as meditation and yoga to demonstrate that these techniques can evoke genuine religious experiences. —Trans.
7. Huxley, A. (1962). *Island*. New York: Harper.
8. Janger, E. (1920). *In Stahlgewittern*. Self-published.
9. Janger, E. (1930). *Das abenteuerliche Herz*. Berlin: Mittler.
10. Janger, E. (1952). *Besuch auf Godenholm*. Frankfurt: Klostermann.
11. Benn, G. (1949). *Provoziertes Leben*. In: *Ausdruckswelt, Essays und Aphorismen*. Wiesbaden, Limes Verlag. Translated by Ralph Metzner (1963). Provoked life. *Psychedelic Review* 1: 47-54.

12. Gelpke, R. (1962). Von Fahrten in den Weltraum der Seele: *Berichte über Selbstversuche mit Delysid (LSD) und Psilocybin (cy)*. *Antaios* 3(5): 393-411. Translated by Jonathan Ott (1981). *On travels in the universe of the soul: Reports on self-experiments with Delysid (LSD) and psilocybin (cy)*. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 13(1): 81-89.
13. The term psychonaut was coined in 1970 by Ernst Janger to describe psychic voyagers who use entheogens as their vehicles. See: 15 below.
-Trans.
14. Hofmann, A. (1979). *LSD-Mein Sorgenkind*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta. Translated by Jonathan Ott (1980). *LSD-My Problem Child*. New York: McGraw-Hill; (1985). Los Angeles: Jeremy Tarcher.
15. Janger, E. (1970). *Annäherungn-Drogen und Rausch*. Stuttgart: E. Klett Verlag.
16. Janger, E. (1966). *Grenzgunge: Essays, Reden, TrS~ume*. Stuttgart: E. Klett Verlag.