

# The Man Who Turned on the World

Michael Hollingshead

## FOREWORD

by Alan Bold

'THE MIRACULOUS MAN'  
(For Michael Hollingshead)

*Date of birth unknown, and inconsistent  
In the presentation of his point of view,  
He may have got near Kapilavastu*

*After some service in the orient.  
Certainly he settled for a while  
For something eerie happened at Bodh Gaya  
Where he overcame an enemy named Mara  
And retained a smug, but somehow moving, smile.*

*Later this became more pure and poignant  
Until some vile and murderous abuse  
Mocked his claim to be king of the jews  
And made him shrewd and militant.*

*From Medina he took Mecca by force  
Saying man was made from wicked gouts of blood.  
It's different to assess just how much good  
He ever did. Or ever will, of course*

Edinburgh 1972

## 1. A Lovin' Spoonful

In the beginning, more exactly... in 1943, Albert Hofmann, a Swiss bio-chemist working at the Sandoz Pharmaceutical Laboratories in Basel, discovered—by accident, of course; one does not deliberately create such a situation—a new drug which had some very remarkable effects on the human consciousness. The name of this drug was d-Lysergic Acid Diethylamide Tartrate-25, a semi-synthetic compound, the lysergic acid portion of which is a natural product of the ergot fungus *Claviceps purpurea*, which grows on rye and other grains. Its most striking pharmacological characteristic is its extreme potency—it is effective at doses of as little as ten-millionths of a gram, which makes it 5000 times more potent than mescaline. It was during the synthesis of d-LSD-25 that chance intervened when Dr. Hofmann inhaled some of the whitish-brown powder and discovered that it produced some strange effects on his mind. ... 'Objects, as well as the shape of my associates in the laboratory, appeared to undergo optical change... fantastic pictures of extraordinary plasticity and intensive colour seemed to surge towards me.'

### 1960

*New York City*, seventeen years later... a small package from Switzerland arrived in my mail one morning containing one gram of Dr. Hofmann's acid, which I had arranged to be sent to me. There was also a bill for \$285. I had first heard of LSD from Aldous Huxley, when I had telephoned him at his home in Los Angeles to inquire about obtaining some mescaline, which he had recently been using. His information also included the name of Dr. Albert Hofmann and a caution, subsequently unheeded, to take great care if ever I should take any of the stuff: 'It is much more potent than mescaline, though Gerald (Heard) and I have used it with some quite astonishing results really.'

There had been no difficulty obtaining even one gram of LSD—I simply asked an English doctor friend of mine to write the order on a sheet of New York hospital letterhead saying that

I needed this ergot-derivative as a 'control' drug for a series of bone-marrow experiments. Eagerly I unwrapped the package. The acid was in a small dark jar marked 'Lot Number H-00047', and in appearance looked a bit like malted milk powder. My problem was how to convert the loose powder into a more manageable form. One gram would make 5000 individual doses and I was obviously going to need to measure it out in some way. I decided to randomise it by mixing it into a stiff paste made from icing sugar.

I cleared the kitchen table and set to work. First I poured some distilled water into a bowl, and then mixed in the LSD. When all the acid had dissolved I added confectioner's sugar until the mixture was a thick paste. I then transferred my 'divine confection', spoon by laborious spoon, into a sixteen-ounce mayonnaise jar, and, by what magical alchemic process, the stuff measured exactly 5000 spoonfuls ! In other words, one teaspoon of the stuff ought to contain 200 gamma (millionths of a gram), which would be sufficient for an eight-to ten-hour session, and a pretty intense one at that.

I should add at this point that I had, like all good chefs, been tasting the preparation during its making with my finger, and must have absorbed about the equivalent of five heavy doses before I finally screwed the lid on the mayonnaise jar, which left me somewhat unprepared for what was to follow.

I rented at that time the floor-through apartment above Jim Paul Eiler's 'Showplace' on West Fourth Street near the corner of Macdougall and Washington Square. It was a large rambling place-with a roof garden over the back from which to observe the life of the Village and the concrete towers of Manhattan.

I moved on to the roof and sat up there and began to observe. ... *I beheld a city of 10,000 angry streets, and giant buildings fingered the sky; from a thousand throats the giant screams. A hundred trash-cans tumble lids and litters across the sidewalks, a siren goes hooting past, and all is CHAOS. My mind was in a state of confusion, of whirling distractions and distortions and intensely vivid non sequiturs. 'I have broken the shell!' I laughed. 'Now I step forth easily from my body's prison-cell and live in the realm of the primordial. I shall sing of heroes, wild men of the mountains, guardians of the door, and ancient legends.... I shall transform myself into a god who could walk across the tops of mountains... thousand-headed was Purusa, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed he reached beyond the earth!... Cuhulain rides his five fiery chariots across the firmament! Arthur and Lancelot in battle! The ground shakes! In the beginning was blood and fire.... I shall sing that you might listen and would know the glory that mall is, now, in his first dawning.... In the beginning, then ... proudly the purple cock-man proclaims the arrival of the Dawn. The Warden of Robes enters to attend our abracadabra about Acid and All accompanied by large assembly of Acid Age Adams, Artists, Anarchists, Actors, Angels, Alchemists, Athletes, Aristocrats and assorted Acrobats. The 'gates of heaven' swing open on the court within; worshipping priests from 10,000 countries kneel before the royal insignia. The first rays of the sun gild the 'fairy palms'; smoke of incense swirls round dragons writhing on each royal robe—they seem to float among the clouds.*

It was a very strange first trip indeed, and it was of many hours' duration, perhaps fifteen. What I had experienced was the equivalent of death's abolition of the body. I had literally 'stepped forth' out of the shell of my body, into some other strange land of unlikeliness, which can only be grasped in terms of astonishment and mystery, as an *état de l'absurde*, ecstatic nirvana. I could now 'understand' why death could produce the sort of confusion I was experiencing. In life we are anchored through the body to such inescapable cosmic facts as space, gravity, electromagnetic vibrations and so forth. But when the body is lost, the psychic factor which survives is free to behave with uninhibited extravagance.

It was only after many, many acid sessions that I learned how to cope satisfactorily with the incessant barrage of sense-eclipsing distractions, pleasant and unpleasant, delightful and horrible, which acid induces. I discovered, for instance, that I could, by concentrating my attention on some object, put a stop to the whirling distractions. The object on which I concentrated became a radiance of pure light, very wonderful—so wonderful that one could be wholly absorbed in it. It would be possible to stop at this point, to convince oneself that this was the Real Thing, the ultimate illumination, Nirvana! Or the 'Divine White Light'! But—let's

face it—LSD is not the key to a new metaphysics of being or a politics of ecstasy. The 'pure light' of an acid session is not this—it may even be the apotheosis of distractions, the ultimate and most dangerous temptation. But it does allow one to live at least for a time in the light of the knowledge that every moment of time is a window into eternity, that the absolute is manifest in every appearance and relationship, and that Love is Wisdom in daily practice. And though hard, it is possible to live this way. It is the development of another state of consciousness within 'one's' own self, one that leads to a vision of existence in which only the sense of wonder remains and all fear is gone. It is also the impetus that makes a few travellers in each generation set off in search of the grail, the genii in the bottle, the magic ring....

Once back in the present, when the 'mountains were again the mountains, and the lakes again the lakes' I felt a degree of apprehension about the acid I had by now stashed away in my study. It was pretty volatile stuff. How on earth could the energy of this strange atom be utilised; how could man adapt it to his needs? LSD was a bundle of solutions looking for a problem, the problem being how to undertake a work of integration on a massive scale. Modern man had fallen victim to the merciless vision of his own sceptical intelligence. Caught up in a wilderness of externals, he was a stranger to himself.

Accordingly, I telephoned Aldous Huxley at his home; he might at least advise me about what was happening with regard to LSD. Huxley had used both mescaline and LSD and had found in them, perhaps, the visions he had so long sought. On the phone, he was very sympathetic. No, there was still no one in a position to say what was happening in relation to visionary experience via LSD, though it seemed to excite a great curiosity in the minds of many he had discussed it with. Of course, there was a lot of work to be done; unconsciously, if not always consciously, everyone knows that this Other World is there, inside the skull—and any news about it, any discussion of its significance, its relevance to other aspects of life, is a matter of universal concern. Perhaps 'mindchangers' should be used in the context of some kind of yoga of total awareness, leading to enlightenment within the world of everyday experience—which of course under acid becomes the world of miracle and beauty and sublime mystery when the experience is what it always ought to be. This could not be achieved by acid alone but is achieved, essentially, through constant awareness—conscious even of the unconscious, by means of the ordinary processes of living. Perhaps acid is above all a therapy for the wide spread sickness of insensitiveness and ignorance which psychologists call 'Normality' or 'mental health'.

Huxley called me back a few days later, having thought over my problem, and suggested that I go to Harvard to meet a Dr. Timothy Leary, a professor there, whom he'd met earlier that year in Copenhagen, when he had presented a paper on induced visionary experience before the Fourteenth International Congress of Applied Psychology. Leary had also read a paper on 'How to Change Behaviour' describing the induction of visionary mental states by psilocybin, the synthetic of the sacred mushroom of Mexico. He spoke very warmly of Leary as a scientist but also as a man, whom he described as 'a splendid fellow'. Leary had also written three classic monographs on personality and psychotherapy.

'If there is any one single investigator in America worth seeing,' Huxley assured me, 'it is Dr. Leary.'

## **1961**

There had been quite a bit of free-floating acid around Greenwich Village that winter, but mostly restricted to the 'beats' of the East Village and a few wealthy Manhattan cats to whom they sold it. It was legal, of course, in those days, and this considerably reduced the paranoia level. 'Taking acid' had not yet become the popular pastime of a turned-on youth, for such didn't exist. The world of the late fifties and early sixties was unimaginably drab and dreary. It was still a tight little conformist world of roles and rules and rituals. Our culture had drowned itself in a sea of contradictory and conflicting voices. And, politically, Dulles & Co. had tied the coldwar noose around all our throats. We had finally conned ourselves into submission to some nameless fear. Western civilisation lived under the paranoia of the mushroom cloud. Liberal and religious values had eroded to the point of insignificance. Twentieth-century mass-society showed the political inhumanity inherent in technological life-worlds. And it was

perhaps inevitable that some of us took to acid (and later to myths and ancient stories) to seek a formula that would turn the surrounding world to dust and reveal the portals of paradise.

But I think that for perhaps the majority of the avant-garde. in this very early period, LSD was still something of an 'exotic' whose effects could not be taken for granted. LSD involved risk. It was anarchistic; it upset our apple-carts, torpedoed our cherished illusions, sabotaged our beliefs. It was something you had to guard against, or you might explode. It was a difficult experience to assimilate. It was impossible to integrate with the ordinary world. And so on and so forth.

'Turning on' had not yet become a natural part of our existence, or a symbol of certain life-styles, or philosophy, or religion, or personal liberation. Yet there were some, of my circle, who, with Rimbaud, could say, 'I dreamed of crusades, senseless voyages of discovery, republics without a history, moral revolution, displacement of races and continents: I believed in all the magics.'

And our Crusade was to launch LSD on the world! Whilst other artists/visionaries/seers had been content to observe the world, the New Message was simple: if things are not right, then change them! We would make the dynamic life-giving adventure of exploring Inner Space the New Romance! We would set off an explosion that would sweep through our culture and give birth to a New Radicalism!

We would even found a drug-based religion, whose message would be 'Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out! We would proclaim the Reign of the Happily Integrated Modern Soul ! We would become the first signatories of a new 'Declaration of Evolution' as published in Timothy Leary's *The Politics of Ecstasy*.

After my first few acid sessions, I began to undergo some kind of metamorphosis. None of the successive issues in my life were plain, nothing was concrete; I was now that helpless drifting man, cut off from his roots, with no destination told.

The reality on which I had consciously tried to build my personality had dissolved into Maya, the hallucinatory facade. Stripped of one kind of reality, and unwilling or unable to benefit from the possibilities of another one, I was acutely aware of my helplessness, my utter transience between two worlds, one inside and the other wholly within. It set up a dichotomy, and I was at the mercy of two contradictory yet seemingly inseparable attitudes. There was, on the one hand, still the familiar world of ordinary appearances, which I could cope with without ever needing to find any meaning for, and then there was this 'Other World' whose existence alone seemed to disclose the nature of reality as it concerned me personally. In the former I was a stranger to myself, a puppet of rote-consciousness, a cipher on the face of existence, an object furnished with a label and a price-tag, numbed and numbered by a neutral time that is neither duration nor eternity. In the latter I was not a dot but a species in the great evolutionary experiment, a conscious agent in the cosmic processes called life; it provided me with some 'meaning' for solitary existence, beyond the falsifications of the mind, where I hoped I could achieve a simple awareness and even affirmation of the world.

I was faced with the necessity to prepare a set of 'spiritual coordinates'; a set of natural harmonious rules to follow as I spun off into neurological space, and more effective instruments of symbolisation in order to leave this swampland in which I moved. I was lost and exhausted, ambushed by stagnation and depression. Yet it was the energy created out of this tension, verging on strain, that kept me going in New York for a few more months.

I was working in New York at that time as the executive secretary of the Institute for British American Cultural Exchange. This grandiose title meant that I was in the service of a semi-official British propaganda agency in the field of international cultural relations. There was an impressive board of directors, which included Lord and Lady Natalie Douglas-Hamilton, Huntington Hartford (the megamillionaire whom Tom Wolfe has described as someone who had come amongst us in the role of a 'Martin Luther for modern culture'), Lionel Trilling, W. H. Auden, Congressman Seymour Halpern, General Frank Howley, the Vice-President of New York University, Buell Gallagher, President of City College, New York.

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 CONFLICTING ENGAGEMENTS WHICH PREVENT IT.  
 JACOB K JAVITS

My offices were in the Huntington Hartford building in the East Fifties, which cost a million dollars to convert into Nassau Paladian and housed, in addition to the Institute Speedparks Inc., The American Handwriting Institute, Show magazine, and downstairs, a private art gallery. It was a neat little set-up, and I felt rather pleased that we had got it. Some of my time was spent selecting scholarship candidates for a Junior Year programme at St. Andrews University (Lord Douglas-Hamilton's brother, The Duke of Hamilton, was Chancellor); and for short-term credit courses at Oxford and Cambridge; some of my time was spent meeting and talking with executives of the large Foundations like the Carnegie and the Rockefeller Institute, to try to get more money for our programmes. But most of the time I spent smoking grass; and, towards the end, getting stoned on acid. And, as the summer of 1961 approached, it became increasingly clear that I should have to resign. The programmes had got all their dates mixed up, and nothing about accommodation had been firmed up; the files were in a mess, and piles of unanswered correspondence littered my desk; bills accumulated and income was reduced to almost nil. My hours became erratic. I very seldom bothered to answer the phone. When people came to see me I would always be stoned and doubtless altogether incoherent. I attacked the Queen. I spoke disparagingly of British culture. I spoke of 'kingdoms yet to come' with a sort of women's magazine glibness. And I kept having visions of this 'Golden Dawning' of consciousness in man which would enable us to get things whole, to see life's magic miracles, to know that indeed all is in everything from blade of grass to man and woman. It was a vision of some ideal existence in which there was only the sense of wonder, and all fear gone; of a certain state of being that was there not to be judged, but simply to be.

### **September 1961**

*Cambridge, Massachusetts...* The New England Fall was just beginning, and the leaves on the trees were changing colour; the air was fresh and clear, like Vichy water, and Cambridge seemed an altogether nice place to be. I didn't know anybody, so I rented a couple of rooms in a house on Brattle Street, and moved in.

My object in coming to Cambridge was to meet Dr. Leary to discuss LSD, or more exactly, to seek his advice about what I should do with the some 4975 trips I had left in the mayonnaise jar. The next day I telephoned him at his office on Divinity Avenue and arranged to meet him over lunch at the Faculty Club.

On the telephone Leary was very much the cautious professional and I was a bit apprehensive.... Leary, the author of *Interpersonal Diagnostic of Personality*; Leary, the no-nonsense behaviourist; Leary, the number one American expert in personality testing. And yet, according to Huxley, this was the man who was doing important new research in the non-clinical uses of the Sacred Mexican Mushroom.

At twelve o'clock I walked along Mount Auburn Street, flanked on one side by white colonial houses with pretty gardens, and on the other by the river Charles. A university

boat crew lazed by the boathouse. On the banks tidy groups of students sat rapping or reading. Across the river, sharply outlined in the bright sunlight, I saw the Georgian features of the Harvard Business School, and the busy Boston Freeway reminded me of Robert Lowell's lines:

Everywhere  
giant finned cars nose forward like fish;  
a savage servility  
slides by on grease.

Soon I was in Harvard Square, and it was not long before I reached the Faculty Club, an impressive building just across from the Library. I had arranged to meet Leary inside the main lobby, near the cloakroom. But the place was jammed with intense, garrulous, smooth-suited, young men, and, since I had no idea what Leary looked like, I asked a porter at the reception desk whether the professor had arrived. He pointed to a handsome, clean-cut man in his late thirties wearing a Harris-tweed jacket and grey flannels. He also had on a pair of torn sneakers and one red-socked toe peeped out from one largish hole. He had the conventional Harvard short-back-and-sides and a hearing-aid visible on one exposed ear. He was reading the sports section of the *Boston Globe*.

'Dr. Leary? How nice to meet you. I'm Michael Hollingshead.' We shook hands, and he smiled broadly and beckoned me to the dining-room door, seating us at a small table by the wall, where we could talk without being disturbed. I asked him to order for both of us. We small-talked during the meal. Leary seemed a bit distracted with other thoughts, and sometimes would fiddle with his hearing-aid, as though blaming the instrument for his inability to catch what I was saying. So I said nothing, and encouraged him to talk. He was a very funny raconteur and told stories about his life in Berkeley and his family and his sabbatical in Florence. It wasn't until the coffee came that he got on to the subject of psychedelics. He began telling me about his work with psilocybin, the mushroom drug. It seemed that the University had let him set up something he called the Harvard Psychedelic Research Project for the study of these drugs and to test their potential as aids to facilitate behaviour change. He felt they had great potential use in such areas as alcoholism, recidivism, even in juvenile delinquency. He then elaborated his theory of the game-structure of Western society; how we all play games, for which there are definite roles, rules, and rituals. Sick or mentally deranged persons were 'game-losers'. If the game was, say, football, then a neurotic person would turn up wearing cricket gear and insist that everyone play his game. Efficient game players were those who could make definitions and from them decisions which corresponded to the consensus reality. He told me that the psilocybin experience helped people get out of all games, move into a space he called 'non-game', from which Olympian height the subject could see his own hang-ups. And it was this insight, he felt, that would provide them with the necessary impetus to change.

I said that I'd never taken psilocybin, but it interested me and I'd like to try it, if that could be arranged. I then told him a bit about my first acid experience, and how I had been taking it on average about once a week since then, and was now more baffled than when I started using it. I felt LSD was probably more confusing than illuminating.

Leary said there was still a lot of work to be done in the field. He had not himself yet taken LSD, but he imagined its effects on the mind to be similar to those he had experienced under psilocybin. The main problem was one of communication: how to verbalise an essentially non-verbal experience in such a way as to make sense to people living in the ordinary game-reality who anyway thought of these drugs as mysterious rather than mystical. Here we were talking of temporary alterations of the human consciousness brought about by these extraordinary substances—which cause a by-passing of automatic programming in human speech and action, making possible direct awareness at higher-than-normal levels of intensity and in other-than-utilitarian worlds of

experience. These drugs, if properly used, could be the source of energy that is to transform the human mind. But for the majority of his behaviourist colleagues, these drugs were a threat to their game. They tend to hide their mediocrity behind 'scientific' models and mechanical designs of the human organism which are by definition mediocre, generating triviality and error. As a consequence, they veer easily into paranoid fantasies about the subjective nature of the psychedelic experience, probably thinking anyone using these drugs is pretty crazy anyhow.

Nevertheless, the situation at Harvard was pro the Behaviourists —B. F. Skinner, the American Pavlov, was getting massive appropriations from the Federal Government for programmed teaching machines and research into conditioned and re-conditioned human behaviour, and for whom the term 'mind' was about as meaningless as the word 'snow' to someone living in the middle of Africa. Mind, if it existed, was an aberration of the computer's 'mind'; man was a conditioned animal, imprinted from birth for life in ordered, concrete society. His brain was a problem-solving mechanism, either efficient or inefficient. Skinner and his boys were engaged in nothing less than a massive programme of human conditioning, starting at primary school level.

Skinner's philosophy stood in direct contrast to Leary's. Rather than thinking of mind in man as some kind of spanner in the works, the psychedelic-user is more likely to see it as a truly miraculous instrument for new perceptions and insights about those aspects of reality which concern him personally. He may feel awed by the sudden power it releases during a session and realise that his mind is his greatest endowment.

Leary had little time for those scientists who extended the machine paradigm to living organisms.

'Qualitative change is needed in the pattern of mind-research if we are to discern an enlarged meaning of nature and of man extending beyond mathematical and experimental analysis of sensory phenomena and human behaviour. The new direction of research has been to hasten the technicalisation of human nature and ignore as a superstition all work on those aspects of human nature which do not conform with the orthodoxy of the body-machine concept. We must move beyond this sort of scientific tyranny of behaviouristic and mechanistic procedures, where man is understood in terms of controls or biological-drive mechanisms. This is carrying Descartes too far. A psychedelic user cannot reduce the mind-brain problem to a materialistic monism. He is more likely to see how the current over-emphasis on mechanism has produced a corresponding dislocation of vision, one that is resulting in a de-humanisation of man. He is more likely to turn into a revolutionary than a college professor.'

It was getting late. Leary had a class at three o'clock. I wondered how best to approach the fact that I had some LSD with me. I decided to leave the matter for another day. We shook hands and I said I'd call him again in a few days' time, for another meeting. Fine. Perfect. We parted feeling it had been a good lunch.

A couple of days passed, one of them tripping around the museums and the banks of the Charles. The students seemed strangely distant, and, in an odd sort of way, English-looking, probably as a result of wearing tweedy clothes and baggy grey trousers. Perhaps these are the robots Skinner has conditioned, I thought, their minds sanctioned by scientific objective reality as information-storing, predicting and computing mechanisms, a 'tool' with which to shape a better life-style in the great American dream. They seemed unaware that there exists a range of energies and awarenesses beyond rote-consciousness or the imprinted symbols of rational thought which can work with a rapidity and efficiency beyond the workaday conceptual processes. For every moment of human life is affected by the way man's mind works. Everything we see, touch, think and feel is linked with it, so that when the mind is extended for brief moments, as it is under acid, these elements can be used more freely and creatively, and can therefore be a tremendously important influence in a person's life....

My need to communicate this was very great indeed. But the few people I did talk to

about LSD seemed blithely indifferent, or even a little shocked. I felt like some sleazy drug operator in Marseilles, trying to hook young kids on heroin. I began to get depressed, feeling that I'd got life cocked or somehow incomplete after fooling about with all this acid. By the end of my third day in Cambridge, I was feeling suicidal. A communication problem, Leary had said. Okay, then, I'd try to communicate with him, perhaps he would be able to empathise with my plight.

I got him at the office the next day. I had already mailed him a short note the night before alerting him to my inability to cope with my life-situation due to the disruptive influence of acid. And when he got on the phone he spoke calmly and authoritatively about how we must all share our knowledge about these drugs, and how I had a lot to contribute, and that a George Litwin would drive round to pick me up at my digs and bring me back to the office.

George turned up some ten minutes after putting the receiver down. He was a genial and open Leo with lots of energy forever rising. On the way to the office, he told me that he was a graduate student in psychology, and Leary was his thesis adviser. He'd taken psilocybin a few times, and had even taken mescaline at the University of Chicago where he went to school. Now he was a behaviourist who believed in psychedelic drugs, which he felt was a bit heretical of him to say the least.

Soon we pulled up outside a pretty colonial style house marked 'Social Relations Department: Center for Research in Personality', which I later discovered was the same building in which William James had done his researches with nitrous oxide (laughing gas) until he was told to stop.

George lead me along a corridor to Leary's office. Leary was seated behind a desk dictating something to his Chinese secretary, who kept giggling every time someone came through the door. A few young men sat on a sofa quietly reading from piles of mimeographed papers. One wall was entirely covered with a huge blackboard on which the day's timetable was noted.

Leary waved me to a chair next to the desk, finished whatever he was dictating, and screwed in the ear-aid in an obvious attempt to let me know he was listening with all ears.

I repeated some of my thoughts explaining how my personal philosophy had changed since LSD. I needed a place where I could simply be, without always having to justify what I was into. I also explained that I was broke and needed a place to crash.

He invited me to move in to his house in the Newton Center suburb of Boston. He said that I could use the attic, which was large and spacious, where I would not be disturbed. He gave me a \$20 bill and asked George to take me over there. Once I was more settled, I could join his team working with psilocybin. Would I like to teach a course one hour a week to a class of graduate students —a course in existential philosophy, concentrating on the phenomenological aspects of heightened states of consciousness? Would I like to borrow his Volkswagen to drive to New York and pick up the rest of my things? Would dinner at eight suit me?

He could not have been more helpful. I began to realise what Huxley had meant when he called Leary 'a splendid fellow'.

Apart from Tim and myself, the only other people living in the house were his two children, Jackie and Susan. There were the occasional girl-friends, and visitors up for the weekend from New York. But usually the house was quiet and its life simple.

It was a big house with a beautiful garden and sited next to the Little League Baseball ground, where Tim, Jackie and myself would often join one of the evening games with the local kids. The rest of the evening might be spent in telling each other amusing stories, discussing the implications of psychedelics, baseball or travel. Tim was also a great fan of D. H. Lawrence, and we would chat about Lawrence's life and his 'message'. Every now and then I'd bring up the matter of the mayonnaise jar, but Tim didn't seem particularly interested in trying LSD, probably because he didn't want to get other issues in the way of his on-going (and officially sanctioned) 'mushroom research', as it was referred to in those days. His view might be summarised as saying: When you've had one psychedelic, you've had them all. But he did give me some psilocybin to try, which came



in the form of tiny red pills from Sandoz.

I dropped three of these pills, which was considered about optimal dosage, for my first trip. I was alone in the house. And I felt good about taking a session, especially as I was very curious to see how the experience would compare with acid.

The effect was excellent, though not as powerful as LSD. It contained lots of magic and induced all kinds of very pleasant visual changes, with colours deepening, turning the house and garden into a Persian miniature of exquisite beauty and prettiness.

I was a little disappointed when, after four hours, the landscape changed back into twentieth-century American reality. But I enjoyed it and used to take it pretty regularly after that. Perhaps after all, LSD was too powerful for our fragile nervous systems to bear? Besides, the effects of psilocybin were of only four hours' duration, compared to anything up to twelve hours on high-dosage acid.

I had been living at Tim's for about a couple of weeks when Maynard Fergusson, the Canadian trumpet player, arrived with his wife, Flo. They were old close friends of Tim, and to us seemed the ultimate manifestations of the current New York 'in' crowd they were witty, urbane, hip, and cool in all areas. They also enjoyed smoking pot.

There was in those days no popular voice speaking for marijuana, although it was considered by the 'in' crowd to be the last word in status symbols. It was also illegal, a fact that made Tim feel a bit paranoid about people smoking it in his house. He did not use it himself. He took nothing stronger than a few micrograms of psilocybin. And of course wine and whisky, which he believed were 'indispensable luxuries'.

One evening the subject turned to LSD. They discussed acid in terms of a fluent flow of neologisms, jazz slang, and weird verbal formulations. They treated the subject lightly, as they also would marijuana and getting stoned in general. And it became apparent to me that they had never actually tried it.

Later, when they heard that I had some, they suggested that we all have an acid session together, including Tim. Tim excused himself, saying he had some papers to mark. But said we were welcome to take it if we wished.

I brought down the mayonnaise jar and gave Maynard and Flo a teaspoonful of the confection. I also took one myself. We then settled comfortably around the blazing log fire, lit some candles and incense, and prepared for take-off. Tim had been fussing about in the room while all this had been going on, trying not to let his curiosity take him away from whatever other business he was engaged in.

After about thirty minutes, Flo, who until that moment had been lying fully reclined on the sofa, sat up, suddenly, her face one huge smile, and started waving her arms at Tim. 'You gotta try this, Tim, baby. It's f-a-n-t-a-s-t-i-c!'

'Yeah, really, Tim,' confirmed Maynard, his face glowing like an electric toaster. 'It really gets you there—wow—it's really happening, man....'

Perhaps Tim was impressed by the evidence of his two friends, who were after all pretty hip and experienced in using drugs. Perhaps he saw that we were all having a great time, and he wanted in. Whatever it was, something finally decided him and he took a spoon of the acid.

What happened to him next was the subject of a chapter in his book, *High Priest*, which he published several years later. As Tim described it in his book:

'It has been five years since that first LSD trip with Michael Hollingshead. I have never forgotten it. Nor has it been possible for me to return to the life I had been leading before the session. I have never recovered from the shattering ontological confrontation. I have never been able to take myself, my mind, and the social world around me seriously. Since that time five years ago I have been acutely aware of the fact that I perceive everything within the around me as a creation of my own consciousness.

From that day... I have never lost the realisation that I am an actor and that everything around me is a stage prop and setting for the comic drama I am creating... LSD can be a profoundly asocial experience. Since that first trip with Michael I was never able to commit myself to the game of proselytising for LSD itself. Nothing that

doesn't ring true to my ancient cell wisdom and to that central vibrating beam within can hold my attention for very long. From the date of this session it was inevitable that we would leave Harvard, that we would leave American society and that we would spend the rest of our lives as mutants, faithfully following the instructions of our internal blueprints and tenderly, gently disregarding the parochial social inanities.'

[ T. Leary, *High Priest*, The New American Library, New York: 1968.]

## 2. The Harvard Happenings

### 1961

At Harvard University in the early sixties, students had not yet discovered pot; the great majority were into booze, and there was considerable emphasis on physical prowess and middle-class, American WASP values. They had not escaped from the prison of their conditioning and the grand diagonal of crisis in student sensibilities was between those who went to football games and those who didn't. There was also a snob element, the Ivy League ethos, which pervaded the campus. Harvard was a sort of club designated by the *imprimatur* of the establishment. Yet 1961 was to herald a change of consciousness that was to have a seismic effect not only on the sensibilities of many Harvard students but on all sections of American culture. I refer of course to the advent of psychedelic drugs.

Leary had returned from a holiday in Mexico where he had first taken the Sacred Mushroom called *teonacatl* or 'flesh of the gods' which had been used as a kind of sacrament in Aztec religious rites, with a history going back more than 2000 years. The botanical name for this narcotic mushroom is *Psilocybe mexicana*, which has autonomic side-effects similar to those of LSD, though milder. According to the Harvard ethnobotanist, Dr. Richard Schultes,

' . . . psychedelic plants act on the central nervous system to bring about a dream-like state marked by extreme alterations in consciousness of self, in the understanding of reality, in the sphere of experience, and usually marked changes in perception of time and space; they almost invariably induce a series of visual hallucinations, often in kaleidoscopic movement, usually in rather indescribably brilliant and rich and unearthly colour, frequently accompanied by auditory and other hallucinations and varieties of synesthesias.'

The *Psilocybe mexicana* mushroom was synthesised by Dr. Albert Hofmann in 1958 at the Sandoz Laboratories and given the trade name *Psilocybin*. It was one of a range of psychedelic (mind-manifesting, mind-opening) plants which dramatically alter psychological functions such as mood, sensation, perception, consciousness, and cognitive function, which are described as 'mystico-revelatory' by various investigators, but statements about the subjective effects and clinical differences among these substances are, at this stage of our knowledge, in the realm of folklore.

There is considerable disagreement in the literature as to the interpretation of the effects of psychedelics, but there is substantial, one might say unanimous, accord on one major point: they do drastically alter human consciousness. They apparently knock out inhibitory processes in the nervous system (which select, discriminate, censor, evaluate) and they thus release an enormous flow of previously screened-out awareness.

The words which one uses to describe the psychedelic experience depend upon the investigator's cultural background, his language repertoire, his literary breadth. If you usually label 'psychotic' anything which lies outside the middle-class cultural ego of your tribe, you will call these psychedelic experiences pathological. If you define 'maturity' in terms of those modes of perception popular in urban America of 1961, then you may call any experience outside these limits as 'regressive'. It was Leary's thesis that the psychedelic effect is a *transcendental experience, accompanied by intense positive or negative psychological reactions*. There is transcendence of space-time categories, of the ego, of subject-object worlds of experience, of words. There is usually a sense of

unity or 'oneness' with internal and external process which can be ecstatic and exalting, but which can also be frightening to the unprepared person in a strange or non-supportive physical setting. Whilst most psychologists tend to emphasise the pathological reactions; most subjects, who do not think in pathological categories, stress the positive aspects of the drug experience.

This would suggest that specificity of reaction to a psychedelic drug is primarily a function of set and setting. If the mental set of the subject and the physical setting or environment are positive, supportive, anxiety-free, then the reaction of the subject will be ecstatic, insightful, and educational. If the set and setting are clinical, experimental, non-supportive, and impersonal, then the reactions will be frightening and confusing. Take the case of the American Indians who still use peyote in connection with their religion. The peyote rite is one of prayer and quiet contemplation. Their doctrine consists of belief in God, brotherly love, care of family and other worthy beliefs. Peyote is conceived of as a sacrament, a holy god-given food and an available means of communion with the Spirit of the Almighty. When ingested, it causes the worshipper to experience a vivid revelation in which he 'sees' or 'hears' the spirit of a departed loved one, or experiences other religious phenomena; or he may be shown the way to solve some daily problem, and experience a deep reverential attitude to the divine; sometimes he may be reproved for some evil thought or deed. For the Indian, there is nothing debasing or morally reprehensible about using a psychedelic substance to establish contact with the gods, for he believes the peyote cactus to be of divine origin.

For the modern-day Westerner, the psychedelic experience can be very unexpected, seeing how personality is the product of conscious and unconscious imprinting as it may also be seen as the subjective expression of the society in which we happen to be brought up. We like to believe in the general regularity of our mental life, in the constancy of our views or opinions, and like to think how much we are alike, our so-called normality. But in the psychedelic state, our mind seems to obey no rules and, except in trivial ways, seems to exist outside the scope of ordinary rational consciousness.

It was not surprising, therefore, that psychedelic drugs like LSD, psilocybin, mescaline, and peyote were considered by the American psychological establishment as *psychotomimetic* agents, and in the literature we note that researchers use the language of psychopathology to describe mystical and ecstatic experiences, in what Leary calls 'catalogues of anguish and conflict'.

The psychiatric researcher is trained to see the world through negative, pathological lenses. He is myopic and cannot see the wood for the trees. When he observes mystical or transcendental or ecstatic reactions the psychiatrist falls back on the concepts to which he is committed. He uses the language of pathology. Psychedelic drugs produce reactions which are not conventional. Somebody else's ecstasy always looks rather bizarre or foolish or insane to such an observer. Since ecstatic behaviours are not conventional and 'normal' it follows that they must be abnormal. Psychotic. Crazy. A typical psychiatric interpretation reads like this:

'This paper describes our initial pilot study of clinical effects of psilocybin. The volunteers selected were told only that they might receive a substance which would produce temporary changes in perception and bodily feelings or an inert substances. A baseline EEG, mental status and checklist of symptoms was completed before the drug was administered.

(Notice the suggestive use of a 'list of symptoms'; a researcher not oriented towards pathology could have checked the subject out on a list of ecstasies and illuminating experiences.)

'The experiment was conducted in a dark room. A nurse or doctor or both were constantly in attendance. Every fifteen minutes the psychiatrist rated the subject's responses on the checklist and conducted a mental status examination. Volunteers were told that they might be required to remain in the hospital for twenty-four hours, but only in two instances (out of fourteen) was this necessary. Results visual

hallucinations, illusions, a form of hyperacusis, body image distortions, euphoria, anxiety, depression, blocking, disorganised thinking, distractibility, flight of ideas, clang associations, inability to abstract. A subject in response to the proverb "People in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" said before the drug, "You shouldn't point out faults in others that might exist in yourself". After the drug he said, 'At who? That depends on a lot of things.' Autonomic responses, pupillary dilation, nausea, dizziness, flushing, abdominal complaints, blood pressure and pulse.... Usage of these drugs especially in an out-patient setting is fraught with the danger and should be undertaken only with the greatest caution. Psilocybin, LSD and mescaline are extremely potent agents capable of producing acute psychotic behaviour in many individuals. Depression with the ever-present risk of suicide may develop during or after their administration. Additional post-drug effects also occur. Once a patient has been entrusted with a hallucinogen even when instructed to take the drug in small doses, below the hallucinogenic threshold, we have no control over the number of pills he may take. The use of hallucinogens should be restricted to research in a hospital setting.'

The genius of Leary was that he avoided the behaviourist approach to the study and use of psychedelics. Avoid labelling, depersonalising the subject. Don't impose your own scientific jargon or your own experimental game models. Do not set out to validate the redundant implications of your own premises. Do not limit yourself to the pathological hypotheses. Do not interpret ecstasy as mania; calm serenity as catatonia; we must not diagnose Buddha as a detached schizoid; nor Christ as an exhibitionist and/or masochist; nor the mystic experience as a symptom; nor the visionary state as a model psychosis. Right from the start the Harvard Psychedelic Project was surrounded by a charged field of excitement, glamour, adventure, enthusiasm, mystery, hyperbole, passion, controversy. Those who were running the show were charismatic, distinguished, articulate and colourful. Whilst the majority of the Harvard faculty was content to observe the world, our message was revolutionary: if things are not right, then let's change them. LSD et al was the New Heresy that gave birth to momentous social change in the form of a New Radicalism, which had as its core the experience of transcendence. Man could take a 'third eye' view of himself. He could escape from the prison of his conditioning, his robot-self, and move towards wholeness, completeness, place-in-the-world. We could all be conscious agents in the evolutionary process. This was to be our brave Golden Age of Anarchy when man would free himself from the dehumanisation of self-perpetuating, oligarchical bureaucracies and build a new, socialised, humanized super-society. We wanted to make 'turning-on' a natural part of modern man's existence, for the experience of liberation from the tyranny of the ego is an experience so extraordinary, so unique, that it is never forgotten by the individual—indeed, the vision is the impetus to behaviour change.

Our offices at that time were located in an old, remodelled Cambridge house—Five Divinity Avenue. About nine faculty members and seventy graduate students in psychology used the building as their place of research and study, and it was a division of the Social Relations Department.

As fate or chance would have it, the building was called Morton Prince House after one of the first American psychologists to recognise alterations in consciousness as a critical area for research. Morton Prince would still be considered 'far out' today with his curious and bold interests in multiple personality, hypnosis, trance states and visionary experience.

It seemed somehow most natural and proper that we should be initiating a research into altered states of consciousness in this building.

Although Morton Prince was the founder of the Center he was not the first Harvard scholar to adventure boldly into the uncharted realms of inner space. The lineage of this research can be traced to the turn of the century, to that most venerable and greatest of American psychologists, William James, who saw that if the riddle of consciousness was

to be solved then the researcher must use psychophysical means on himself. James tried the peyotl cactus, the sacramental food of the Indians—only to be daunted by the stumbling block of nausea. He also tried nitrous oxide (laughing gas) as an available means of enlarging consciousness, and refers to his experiences in his classic work, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*:

'Some years ago I myself made some observations on this aspect of nitrous oxide intoxication, and reported them in print. One conclusion was forced upon my mind at that time, and my impression of its truth has ever since remained unshaken. It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in all their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question—for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness. Yet they may determine attitudes though they fail to give a map. At any rate, they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality. Looking back on my own experiences, they all converge towards a kind of insight to which I cannot help ascribing some metaphysical significance. The keynote of it is invariably a reconciliation. It is as if the opposites of the world whose contradictoriness and conflict make all our difficulties and troubles, were melted into unity. Not only do they as contrasted species, belong to one and the same genus, but *one of the species* the nobler and better one, *is itself the genus and so soaks up and absorbs its opposite into itself*. This is a dark saying, I know, when thus expressed in terms of common logic, but I cannot wholly escape from its authority. I feel as if it must mean something, something like what the Hegelian philosophy means, if one could only lay hold of it more clearly. Those who have ears to hear, let them hear; to me the living sense of its reality only comes in the artificial mystic state of mind.'

So the genealogical line of research in altered consciousness at Harvard starts with William James and from him to Morton Prince. And after Prince came another giant of psychology: Henry A. Murray, who was the director of the Center.

Professor Murray used fantasy, dream legend, folklore, mystic vision, poetry and esoteric writings as the raw material of his work on human personality. It was perhaps inevitable that he would request a psychedelic session, and in the spring of 1961 he took the drug for the first time. As he said of his decision afterwards, 'Curiosity and the envisaged possibility that I might revel in a little efficacious lunacy spurred me on to it. Why not?' It was a bold decision for a modern behavioural scientist at a time when the behaviourists were the tough-minded guys who wanted to apply impeccable scientific methodology to the study of the human organism, hiding their mediocrity and lack of imagination behind 'scientific' models, techniques, and mechanical 'designs' of the mind which are by definition mediocre and unimaginative, generating triviality and error.

Professor Murray realised that modern man is sitting on top of a simmering volcano. The psychedelic experience is one possible solution to avoid the deepening chaos; but thinkers, philosophers, psychologists and scholars have been singularly reticent about the possibility of expanding man's awareness and as a group are disinclined to face up to the existence of this new range of mind-changing chemicals by modern synthetic chemistry. If the minds of men are blind, then surely we should utilise whatever available means we have to restore true vision.

The psychedelic experience and the insights it provides entail the obligation to communicate and to listen. Revelation and response are not a man's private affair; for the revelation comes to one man for all men, and in his response he is representative of mankind. And since the response is representative it endows the recipient of revelation, in relation to his fellow men, with the authority of the prophet.

But here we come to the central problem. Spiritual fervour is not necessarily accompanied by tact; and men at large do not willingly recognise a new voice of authority when they hear it. (*Vide* Leary, Aldous Huxley, Herald Hear, Alan Watts, Robert Graves, Henry Murray). The difficulties are infinitely aggravated in our present-day world of easy mass communication which encourages a multiplicity of successive and often parallel authorities whose rival claims extend all over the place by virtue of the large followership which they have found. I think if a Jesus or a Buddha were to appear in our midst today he would be hard pressed to convince anyone of the relevance to mankind of his teachings. We find ourselves in a situation that Aldous Huxley, the patron saint of the psychedelic movement, touches on in his essay 'Art and the Obvious', where he talks of the incompetence and vulgarity with which the great obvious truths have been trivialised by hacks, and goes on to say that 'on some of the most sensitive and self-conscious artists of our age, this state of affairs has had a curious and unprecedented effect. They have become afraid of the obviousness of things, the great as well as the little.' But perhaps the communication of an old obvious truth—that the fullest kind of maturity has its core in the experience of personal transcendence—consists not so much in looking for new things to do as in finding new and relevant ways of doing the obvious things.

It is evident that every scientific, ethical, aesthetic and spiritual advance has been made by individuals who, to some extent, broke out of the prison of their linguistic and social conditioning. And when we consider the present situation of the world, we see that advancing technology has rendered our prevailing nationalistic and militaristic culture completely obsolete, inappropriate and appallingly dangerous. Populations, civilisations and their rulers are everywhere the prisoners of this obsolete culture. They can't escape. Indeed, they have been so thoroughly conditioned that, although on the intellectual level they are aware of their danger, they do not, on the subconscious levels really want to escape.

What can be done to help individuals to become the beneficiaries of language and culture without, at the same time, becoming their prisoners and passive victims, or running amok under the intoxicating influence of misused words? There are several 'obvious' things that might be done. We can give young people (and adults) instruction in the nature, limitations and capabilities for evil as well as for good, of language. We can drum into their heads (as every wise man from Buddha and Saint Paul down to those of the present has always done) that words are not the same as things, that concepts are not experiences, that pigeon-holes do not exist in nature, that it is both stupid and unjust to hang a dog because somebody has given him a bad name (Hitler massacred six million Jews who were regarded not as human beings, but as the embodiment of a bad name). We must teach our youth to take their ease with words, naively, by reflex. These thoughts are pretty 'obvious' to those who use psychedelics.

(Huxley: Private correspondence.) 'The accelerating rate of technological advance, of preparation for war, and of population increase leaves the human race very little time in which to get out of the prevailing mess. Perhaps within a decade the difficulties created by increasing pressure of numbers upon resources and by the disruptive impact of technology upon established behaviour patterns, may easily involve the whole world in a deepening chaos, to which the only antidote will be the iron dictatorship of generals or commissars. Those of us who worked with psychedelic drugs believed that within this short period we must try to train up a sufficient and effective minority of individuals, capable of profiting by language and culture without being stultified or made mad by them, capable of changing obsolete behaviour patterns in such a way that mankind may find it possible to live in conformity, not with disastrous slogans and dogmas inherited from the past, but with the life process, the essential Suchness of the world.'

My own view is that LSD may be nothing more than the extreme lengths to which a handful of individuals were prepared to go in order to ensure the continuity of their

necessary freedoms.

This slight digression over, let us return to the activities at Five Divinity Avenue, to that tiny group led by Leary and sustained by Murray, who were to fiddle with irrelevancies while the giant powers multiplied their infernal weapons, threats, and provocations. As soon as it became known that a research project involving the use of these new psychedelic drugs was to be organised, large numbers of graduate students came round to join the project. There were many planning sessions, and an air of excitement pervaded Morton Prince House. We also examined the available literature on the subject, including the works of Aldous Huxley—*Heaven and Hell* and *The Doors of Perception* which detailed his experiences with mescaline, as well as his novel *Island* about a 'positive Utopia' in which psychedelic drugs are used by a community to help expand awareness and bring its members closer to God. It was Huxley's solution to the problems and horrors he described so dramatically in *Brave New World* and *Ape and Essence*. There were also Leary's papers on the subject as well as monographs by Frank Barron, a leading American authority of creativity, Richard Alpert, a member of the Harvard Faculty, and William Burroughs. It was not much, but it was enough to start planning sessions based on non-clinical methodologies.

My job at this time was as an assistant to Leary. I was living in his house and we would drive to the office each morning from Boston, just across the river from Cambridge. I was also given a course to teach, two hours a week, when I would meet with perhaps a dozen graduate students in psychology to plan and discuss LSD sessions. We would sit around discussing how best to run group sessions, the function of the 'guide' or administrator, and the ethical and interpersonal principles involved. The atmosphere of the Center hadn't been this stirred since Harry Murray was trying to solve the Lindberg kidnapping, since Morton Prince tried to get in touch with the co-conscious 'spirit world', since William James started a rage of nitrous oxide parties in Boston's Back Bay.

What we wanted to achieve was an 'open', collaborative and humanistic response to our research in order to produce optimally positive reactions to the drug experience. And by 'positive reaction' we meant a pleasant, ecstatic, non-anxious experience leading to a broadening of awareness and an increase in individual insight. The following principles were laid down by the team:

1. Participants whenever possible will alternate roles of observer and subject.
2. Participants will be given all available information about the drug and its effects before the experiment. We will attempt to avoid an atmosphere of mystery and secret experimentation.
3. The participants will be given control of their own dosage. A maximum dosage will be determined by the principal investigators. This maximum number of tablets will be given the subject and he will be told to dose himself at the rate and amount he desires.
4. The sessions will take place in pleasant, spacious aesthetic surroundings. Music, art reproductions, sympathetic observers will be available.
5. The subject will be allowed to bring a relative or friend to be his observer.
6. No subject should take the drug in a group where he is a stranger.
7. An attempt will be made to have one observer for each two subjects. The subjects will be given complete freedom of the house but cannot leave the premises. Observers will be available at all times for discussion.
8. Observers will be present at the end of the session for follow-up discussions.

It is interesting to look back at some of the original members of the Harvard Psychedelic Project, who were first introduced to LSD via the contents of the magic mayonnaise jar, and to note their successive and deepening involvement in the psychedelic movement, which was to spread from Harvard to all sections of our Western culture as well as introduce a new vocabulary for a turned-on youth movement ('psychedelic', 'acid', 'trip', 'stoned'); new slogans ('turn on, tune in, drop out'); new artistic forms (psychedelic art, acid rock, psychedelic discotheques, a Beatle album openly celebrating the psychedelic experience); new drug-associated organizations (The International Federation for Internal Freedom [IFIF] in Cambridge, The Agora Scientific Trust in New York, The World

Psychedelic Centre in London, The Castalia Foundation at Millbrook); new religions (The Neo-American Church, The League for Spiritual Discovery, The Free High Church of Cumbrae [Scotland], The Church of the Awakening, San Francisco); new life-styles (head shops, ashrams, communes, The Brotherhood of Eternal Love); an underground newspaper service; new literary forms and themes (*High Priest*, *Time Psychedelic Review*, *The Ecstatic Adventure*, *The Psychedelic Experience*, *Psychedelic Prayers*, *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience*) and so on and so forth.

Along the crowded corridors of the Center walked Aldous and Laura Huxley, Arthur Koestler, William Burroughs, Charles Olson, Allen Ginsberg and Peter Orlovsky, famous musicians and painters, ministers, cured dope addicts, New York hipsters, oriental religious leaders, rabbis and even a couple of Jesuits. 'There is some possibility that my friends and I have illuminated more people than anyone else in history.'

It was not long before the Harvard Research Project had grown to include some forty professors and graduate students, who had sensed in the psychedelic experience a new tool with which to shape and extend their awareness of the world and the other people in it. And their claims on behalf of LSD et al were highly articulate, and perhaps tinged with a fervour usually associated with religious belief. Naturally, this had a disturbing effect on their colleagues, who were doing *real* psychology—Delay of Gratification Experiments; Need for Achievement; Personality Studies of Lower-Class Irish in South Boston; The Rorschach Test; Need for Approval; Perception and Motivation Studies. Psychology was the science of rats and tests and statistics. Exploring and mapping new realms of internal experience didn't belong here. Or did it? Who could now really say? The hermetic vase had been opened, and the *avis Hermetis* had flown the nest. The dynamic life-giving adventure of exploring *inner space* was to become the *new romance*.

It was inevitable that, as our drug programme expanded, criticism and rumour began to flourish about our activities. One of the most vocal of the critics was Professor David McClelland, a professor of psychology, a protestant-ethic man, highly intelligent, an expert in the psychological basis of 'fantasy', a prominent Quaker, dedicated to external achievement.

McClelland had decided to bring matters to a head by calling a meeting of the staff of the Center in which he revealed in no uncertain terms his growing concern over the Psychedelic Project. To judge by the behaviour of Mexican *curanderas* and Indian mystics, he said, one would expect the chief effects of psychedelic substances to be to encourage withdrawal from contact with social reality and to increase satisfaction with one's own inner thought life. Research reports from the current Harvard project, he said, 'are not inconsistent with these expectations'. And went on to note that 'initiates begin to show a certain blandness, or superiority, or feeling of being above and beyond the normal worlds of social reality'. He was concerned about a developing interpersonal insensitivity, about the 'inability to predict in advance what the social reaction of a "psilocybin party" would be'. And religious and philosophical naiveté: 'Many reports are given of deep mystical experiences, but their chief characteristic is the wonder at one's own profundity rather than a genuine concern to probe deeper into the experience of the human race in these matters', and impulsivity: 'One of the most difficult parts of the research has been to introduce any order into who takes the drug under what conditions. Any controls have either been rejected as interfering with the warmth necessary to have a valuable experience or accepted as desirable but then not applied because somehow an occasion arises when it seems "right" to have a psychedelic session'. He concluded his statements with this warning: 'It is probably no accident that the society which most consistently encouraged the use of these substances India, produced one of the sickest social orders ever created by mankind in which thinking men spent their time lost in the Buddha position under the influence of drugs exploring consciousness, while poverty, disease, social discrimination, and superstition reached their highest and most organised form in all history.'

Another critic, Dr. Herbert Kelman, lecturer in Social Psychology, said at a later meeting that he had observed that graduate students in the project had formed clannish 'insider groups'. 'I also question whether this project is carried out primarily as an intellectual



endeavour or whether it is being pursued as a new kind of experience to offer an answer to man's ills,' he said.

The problem was one of communication, or rather the lack of any, for we had let the rumours go unchecked. From the point of view of those of us working on the project, psychedelic drugs had an amazing potential, not only as aids to psychotherapy but in such areas as prisoner rehabilitation, personal growth and individual freedom, interpersonal community structures, improved human relations, creativity, art and entertainment, education, religion and philosophy, politics and sociology, experimental behavioural science, to mention just a few of the practical applications we had pursued. We came to believe, as a result of our own experiences and those reported to us by others using psychedelics, that they had the potential to facilitate for the individual the experience of major insights and problem solutions of an intellectual-emotional nature. The realm of these insights or problem solutions is in any area which is meaningful to that individual be it social or personal, intellectual, religious, philosophical, things like that. It was also our conviction that these insights, enlightenment or solutions provided a firm educational foundation for (a) change in the social or intellectual behaviour of the individual, (b) the development of new models regarding the nature of man along with suitable research designs to test such models, (c) the development of more subtle methods of communication between individuals and (d) the conceptualization and formulation of modified social systems.

We tried to counter the criticisms by gathering together some of the students who had used psychedelics, at which time phenomenological reports were made. We also had two graduate students in the Harvard Divinity School and one student from M.I.T. Philosophy Department attending who were considering Ph.D. dissertations in this area.

We also brought out a Newsletter in which we tried to illustrate the impact of the psychedelic experience by quotes from subjects' reports:

'The atmosphere could hardly have been made more pleasant and congenial. The freedom, spontaneity, and personal warmth within the group and between members of the group became very meaningful. In these moments the psychology vs . theology business dropped off, the faculty-student barrier just did not matter, even the friend-stranger game was minimised. For these few moments we interacted not as role players or status seekers but as human beings—men who share common sorrows and common joys, some of which we discussed.

'Things going on inside me took all my attention. Early in my session I fastened upon the question of the distinction between knower and known, recalling Allport's and Hall and Lindzey's discussion of whether the self should be conceptualized in terms of the processes of knowing (self-as-subject, James' pure Ego) or in terms of the structures, patterns, abstractions by which one defines himself (self-as-object, proprium). It seemed to me that these were being dissociated in me, and I as knower was unable to confirm my knowing or to sustain my sense of identity by referring to any stable elements of myself. I recall looking at a Buddhist symbol, a circle divided into two S-shaped parts, one black and one white, with a centre in each of the semi-circles which formed the S. I struggled to bring the two centres together, as if "the 1" had to do so to survive. I can remember twisting and straining with all my might, saying I-I-I-I-I and somehow being aware that the batter of my universe was to maintain the "I" while all else was stripped away.

'Two related feelings were present. One was a tremendous freedom to experience, to be I. It became very important to distinguish between *I* and *Me*, the latter being an object defined by patterns and structures and responsibilities—all of which had vanished—and the former being the subject experiencing and feeling.

'What it all means: First, for psychological theory. One striking aspect of the experience was the lack of sexual feelings or thoughts. We all commented upon this. Another was the lack of aggression—moments of irritability produced only a desire to move away from the irritating one. Moreover, I experienced no developmental

regression. While this does not in any way disprove Freudian theory, it makes it utterly irrelevant to this experience....

'To begin with, the usual: the experience is so fantastic in both its novelty and its power as to beggar all possibility of adequate depiction through words. The most that can be hoped for by way of description is an approximation, and only those who have had the drug can know how far removed from actuality the approximation must be.

'The things that can be said easily and unequivocally are: (1) My physical symptoms were a pronounced quaking which centred in my lower limbs, climaxing (I would judge) about one and a half hours after taking the drug but continuing off and on for about five hours; a slight stomach cramp for about ten hours; the feeling of physical depletion—having been wrung through a wringer—on coming out of the spell; and inability to sleep (bright flashes of light) until 3.00 a.m. (2) No disorientation—at no point did I lose awareness of who I was, where I was, or the group experience that was underway. (3) Considerable apprehension, but no real terror or paranoia.

'Now to the difficult part. The best way I can describe the experience as a whole is to liken it to an emotional-reflective-visual kaleidoscope, with the words listed in order of decreasing importance—mood and emotion most important, thought next, visual (internal, of the sort you can get with your eyes closed) least. Experience involving these three components kept dissolving continuously from one pattern into another.

'Emotionally the patterns ranged from serene contentment and mild euphoria to apprehension which bordered on, but never slipped into, alarm, but overwhelmingly they involved (a) astonishment at the absolutely incredible immensity, complexity, intensity and extravagance of being, existence, the cosmos, call it what you will. Ontological shock, I suppose. (b) The most acute sense of the poignancy, fragility, preciousness, and significance of all life and history. The latter was accompanied by a powerful sense of the responsibility of all for all—all this, it must be pointed out, while lying comfortably and privately flat on one's back.

'Intellectually, the dominant impression was that of entering into the very marrow of existence. Instead of looking at a painting, I was climbing into it, almost through it, as if to view it from behind. So too with being in general. It was as if each of the billion atoms of experience which under normal circumstances are summarised and averaged into crude, indiscriminate wholesale impressions was now being seen and savoured for itself. The other clear sense was that of cosmic relativity. Perhaps all experience *never* gets summarised in any inclusive over-view. Perhaps all there is is this everlasting congerie of an infinite number of discrete points of view, each summarising the whole from its perspective with the sum of all perspectives running the entire gamut from terror to absolute assurance and ecstasy.

'During the supper, after the two groups had gathered together I found myself disinclined to speak much. And the reason seemed clear—and still does. Several times a thought began to take shape. But immediately one saw three or four feasible (and very different) ways any overt expression of it could be taken: straightforward, platitudinous, farcical, too personally revelatory to be publicly broadcast, etc. As language seemed too gross and clumsy to screen out the senses I did not intend, it seemed, not so much more prudent as more truthful in the sense of not-multiplying-misunderstanding, to remain for the most part quiet.

'Felt clean—cleansed, actually—clear and happy the next day; the reverse to about equal degree the day following: normal, thereafter.'

We also tried to scotch the rumours by 'coming out front' and including mention of them in the Newsletter:

'During the fall of 1961 reports circulated in Manhattan literary, artistic and intellectual circles about the availability of black market hallucinogenic drugs, allegedly

psilocybin. These substances were sold in liquid form. Because of our interest in the anthropology of consciousness-altering substances we investigated these reports. Conversations with a physician who analysed this liquid revealed it to be a form of LSD mixed with another substance, probably amphetamine.

'In December we were informed about the case of a well-known model who had been wandering for several weeks in lower Manhattan in a delirious state which was attributed to liquid "mushrooms". A New York businessman who is producing a movie on the Mexican mushroom heard of this case—his wife being a former friend of the model. The girl was located and a physician called. The girl made an apparent recovery. After a week, at the suggestion of the physician, and at our invitation the girl came to Boston for a rest. We had anticipated that we could assist her in integrating her experience into her life. However, she was immediately seen to be suffering from a severer psychosis. A psychiatrist was called and hospitalization arranged in a local hospital. Subsequent investigations have determined that the girl had probably been functionally psychotic for several months.

'On Saturday, morning 7 October, we were asked for help by an undergraduate who knew of our work and was concerned about his girl. It seemed that he had obtained (from New York) and taken a hallucinogen the previous evening and had spent this evening with his girl, who was, apparently, already quite emotionally disturbed as the result of a series of recent traumatic experiences. During the night, although the girl did not take any drugs herself, she was affected by the situation, so much so that she lost contact with reality a number of times during the course of the evening. After a review of the situation, we arranged for the girl to see a Cambridge psychiatrist whom she reported having visited previously. We have continued to see the boy up to the present time in order to help him integrate and make use of his experience.

'A recent rumour suggested that the punch at a University function had been "spiked" with hallucinogens by a student who obtained the material from us. In fact, our materials are carefully safeguarded and are signed out *only* to the members of our staff (who sign a requisition for all material) for specified research purposes. We were unable to ascertain the source of the rumour.

'In the fall of 1961 members of our research group were approached by and met twice with several young men who have been informally experimenting with consciousness-altering substances. All of these young men were or had been Harvard undergraduates. They wanted to talk with us about their experiences, and particularly about their plans for a model free community in Mexico. Two of these young men did go to Mexico to look for a location, but they returned to Cambridge. To our knowledge no community has been established. In our discussions with these men we found them to be imaginative, decent, and full of youthful exuberance. We did nothing to encourage their use of consciousness-altering substances. Rather, we expressed concern about the clandestine atmosphere in which they used these substances and talked very frankly with them about the frightening experiences that stem from secretiveness, suspicion, and fear.'

The Newsletter ended with a paragraph about 'Group leaders':

'There is, at present, a group of psychologists who, during the past year have become very familiar with psilocybin and its effects. They have each participated in a number of sessions both as member and leader. We start with this group as a nucleus of administrators. The group includes: Timothy Leary, Richard Alpert, Michael Kahn, George Litwin, Ralph Metzner, Gunther Weil, Ralph Schwitzgebel, Michael Hollingshead.

But the paranoia was not restricted to Harvard. The Press were having a field-day, and reports of our activities began to appear in such mass-circulation magazines as *The*

*Reporter* ('The Hallucinogenic Drug Cult'); *Look* ('Weird Story of Harvard's Drug Scandal'), and even an article entitled 'Psycho Chemicals as Weapons' which appeared in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, which prompted us to reply in an article duly published in their next issue; our article was headed 'The Politics of the Nervous System'.

#### THE POLITICS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

(Published in *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. Pub: Educational Foundation for Nuclear Science, Inc., 935 E. 60 St. Chicago 37, Ill.)

'The article by Dr. E. James Lieberman entitled "Psycho Chemicals as Weapons" (January, 1962) could lead to serious confusion in the minds of a credulous public and of a credulous military. The author seems to be moved by admirable democratic sentiments, but he has mixed together an astonishing combination of psychiatric folklore and chemical warfare fantasy. The results are misleading.

'The so-called "psychotropic weapons" emphasised in this article are Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD), Mescaline (the synthetic of the "divine peyote cactus"), and Psilocybin (the synthetic of the Sacred Mushroom of Mexico). The author, a psychiatrist, warns that "catastrophic damage that would be neither reversible nor humane" might follow the ingestion of these drugs.

'Dr. Lieberman has presented one of the many sharply divergent viewpoints about the interpretation and application of these drugs. Many psychiatrists believe that LSD, Mescaline and Psilocybin produce psychiatric symptoms—anxiety, depression, detachment, confusion, suspicion, psychosis. Many other investigators have come to the conclusion that these symptoms exist mainly in the mind and eye of the psychiatrist, and that consciousness-expanding chemicals, far from being dangerous weapons, may produce dramatic changes in personality leading to unprecedented peace, sanity and happiness.

'Perhaps it depends on what you are trained to look for. Most psychiatrists who have experimented with such consciousness-affecting drugs report danger. Most non-psychiatrists see these drugs as great benefactors of mankind. Included in the latter group are Albert Hofmann, the brilliant bio-chemist, who first synthesised LSD and Psilocybin; Alan Watts, author and philosopher; Robert S. de Ropp, bio-chemist; Aldous Huxley, novelist and philosopher; and the great American psychologist and philosopher, William James. Also included among those who hail the humanistic promise of consciousness-expanding drugs are a few psychiatrists who have seen beyond psychopathology to the adaptive potentials of the human brain.

'So much for the controversial. Research and not words will resolve these issues. But let us look next at the secure knowledge which exists concerning Mescaline, LSD, and Psilocybin. What are these substances? Sacramental foods? Devilish weapons? Wonder medicines?

'It is easier to say what they are not. They are not addictive, nor sedative, nor intoxicating. There is no evidence for any lasting and very few transient physical effects. Everyone agrees on one factor—they dramatically alter consciousness and expand awareness.

'There is a second generally shared conclusion. Set and suggestibility, expectation and emotional atmosphere account for almost all of the specificity of reaction. If the drug-giver is supportive, open, relaxed, then the results will usually be positive, educational, dramatically insightful. If, on the other hand, the drug-giver is secretive, depersonalised, himself fearful of the drug, then the reactions will probably be anxious and unpleasant.

'As members of a research project studying the effects and application of consciousness-expanding drugs, we have had the opportunity during the last eighteen months of observing the behavioural and phenomenological reactions of over 300 subjects. A glance at some of our results suggests that the military applications of consciousness-expanding drugs may be limited. Ninety-one per cent of the Americans who have participated in our research report pleasant, inspirational experiences. Even with no attempt to be therapeutic, and with only one ingestion,

over sixty per cent of our subjects report subsequent life changes for the better. 'During the past twelve months we have used these drugs for rehabilitation purposes in a maximum security prison. During more than 100 individual ingestions with-hardened criminals we have witnessed dramatic insight and behaviour change reactions.

'Like any product of our advanced technology, the consciousness-expanding drugs can be used to manipulate; to dominate, to frighten or to benefit mankind. A hypodermic syringe of LSD or Salk vaccine in the hands of an enemy can become a frightening weapon. However, the greatest enemies of mankind are ignorance and fear. In the hands of the unfriendly, these weapons—ignorance and fear—can paralyse and destroy.

'What are the protections? Accurate information, openly shared, calm, courageous response to the evidence. Psychiatrists and physicians (on whom Dr. Lieberman calls for rescue from danger, perhaps imaginary) can help to the extent they are collaborative, open, fearless with their fellow men. If the American people are frightened by psychopathological obsessions and psychiatric superstitions and ill-kept chemical warfare secrets, they can be hurt. We are least vulnerable and strongest when we are well-informed. Facts are the defence against any weapon, and particularly the psychological weapons of fear and helplessness.

'The facts about consciousness-expanding substances are not all in yet, but some things are clear. Physiologically these substances act mainly on the brain stem, disinhibiting certain regulating, selecting, screening and controlling mechanisms that constantly guide our perception and thinking. The higher, conscious centres are free temporarily from these artificial restrictions. Behaviourally the main effect of these substances is relaxation. Most of our subjects are very happy just to sit and enjoy the world. There is much less talking, much less superficial movement or conversation. Let us be clear, almost all of our subjects could function very adequately if called on. They choose to relax. Psychologically these amazing substances expand your awareness, they open your mind. The kaleidoscopic and complex world that has always been there, the powerful sensations from every part of your body and the unusual connections of thoughts and feelings that are normally ignored come dramatically into consciousness.

'Of course these experiences can be frightening. If you are not prepared, if you do not know what is happening to you and your brain, if you are struggling to maintain complete verbal control over your senses and your awareness, you will certainly be frightened and angry. But if you are prepared, if you know what kind of a chemical you have taken and what to expect (which most subjects participating in psychiatric research with these substances do not), if you do relax, then the experience can be wonderful, enlightening, and life-changing. If an enemy does drop LSD in the water supply and if you are accurately informed and prepared, then you have two choices. If you have the time and inclination you should sit back and enjoy the most exciting education experience of your life (you might be forever grateful to the saboteur). If you don't have the time or the inclination for this pleasant and insightful experience, then swallow a tranquilliser (which is a good antidote) and you'll be back to the prosaic reality. Tomorrow the drugs and the counter-drugs may be different, but the prescription is the same.

'If an enemy introduced a consciousness-expanding drug into a military command centre, our leaders (if they are accurately informed and experienced about the potentials of expanded awareness) might find that men in certain key positions could function better. In fact, we must assume that these substances are now being used by our space agency for the preparation of cosmonauts, who will certainly undergo altered states of consciousness in space exploration.

'Your brain is your own. Intelligent, open collaboration can expand your mind—with words and with drugs. Only ignorance and misinformation can allow someone else to control it—with their own words or with their drugs or with their imaginary fears.'

Signed:

Timothy Leary  
George Litwin  
Michael Hollingshead  
Gunther Weil  
Richard Alpert

Harvard University

### 3. Leary Flies his Jolly Roger from the Ivy Tower

1962

As the Harvard Psychedelic Project grew in both numbers of people and sessions, and as we become more aware of the effects of these drugs, it seemed that the hinterland of the 'psychedelic mind' is *not* the obscure forest in which Blake saw his tiger, nor the dream-world from which Coleridge conjured the mysteries of Christabel and Kubla Kahn. It was a place altogether different, and much more mysterious.

We studied the reports from students using LSD or psilocybin, and began to chart maps of their interior space (which we also compared with our own experiences). We were hopeful that some of the mystery would thereby be revealed to us, for the 'psychedelic experience' looks intelligible enough. But here we came to certain other realisations. That this Other World is vibrant with strange energy transformations and exists—if it exists at all—in another dimension of mind or self; like the inside of an atom, it is a space forever recreating itself and its own mystery. The more we began to peer into it, the less we could actually 'see'. It seemed to proceed, under pretence of showing you how it works, to display a series of much more surprising worlds. It might be called a more or less 'magical preparation'.

All we could say at this time was that this Other World could be experienced as the moment when one emerges from the prison of 'limited mind' and becomes identified—by the simplest but most intense of the acts of mental life—with the 'limitless mind', whatever it may be, however slight. And we felt this form of identification or sense of 'oneness', far from being an acquired or learned state of mental discipline, was a natural state, the only true natural state for man to be.

It was then but a short step from this realisation to individual members of the project linking their secret 'psychedelic life' to the Beyond. And all sorts of claims on behalf of LSD *et al.* were made on the campus. Some advocates of the psychedelic experience suggested that God may himself be at work in these biochemical compounds, and would quote the work of W. T. Stace, William James even Henri Bergson, in support of their growing mystical beliefs. Professor Huston Smith of M.I.T. said that the subjective drug experiences are sometimes 'strikingly like those reported by mystics, seers, and visionaries of the past'. And in an extensive questionnaire study of eighty-two subjects who took psychedelics at Harvard, the following 'mystical' characteristics were cited by well over half the subjects as occurring 'quite a lot' or 'among the most important aspects of my experience': *loss of time sense; objects snore significant and beautiful; being able to operate out several levels at once; extreme pleasure, ecstasy, cosmic joy, paradise; feeling of being very wise, knowing everything; feeling that nothing need be said.*

According to Freud, at the basis of the human personality lies sex and aggression, the twin poles of deep consciousness around which we revolve. But we found that when the ego-personality was ripped away completely, which can happen during an intensive LSD experience, what was left was 'purest love' and a sense of oneness with all living creatures. No sex; no aggression. Subjects felt free of anger, pity, and disgust. It was as though the supremely ordinary human aspiration to be free could be reached, albeit only briefly, by means of these drugs, which is perhaps what Freud meant when he also spoke of 'the Nirvana instinct' in man, this yearning for peace which lies at the very core of our being. It has always seemed to me a pity that Freud did not write more about the mystical or spiritual dimensions of knowing, for he was obviously aware of the existence within realms which do not easily fall into the categories of psychoanalysis. But in New England in 1962 the subject of mysticism was one that, for most people, was

synonymous with religious faith. And so it was rather natural for project members to turn to spiritual masters in order to help them identify the nature of their new experiences, which were not like anything they had ever imagined before. It was the start of their search for an answer to the riddle of consciousness or for the Grail, as for something from the sky. They felt certain in their own minds that what they had undergone was something which they had personally experienced deeply, and not really something which they had done for themselves. It was a gift from God, a gratuitous grace, aided and abetted by modern synthetic chemistry. God was not only in his heaven all right; he was also here with each single one of us, but wholly within. Naturally, the 'good news' quickly spread across the Harvard campus, and the sort of feedback we got suggested that the rest of the faculty thought Dr. Leary was starting a new religion, with psychedelics as the new sacraments. And to the rest of the psychology faculty, this was absolute heresy.

Accordingly, we began to experiment closer to home, as it were, trying to find other areas in which these substances could be used, particularly those with distressed or helpless people, for whom life had become one long unrelieved struggle. Such was the case with prisoners at the maximum security prison at Concord, just north of Boston.

Tim Leary had had the good vision to see that if a large-dose acid session could help end-of-the-line alcoholics, it might also work with 'hard-core' criminal recidivists. And he had spelled out a research project, using psychedelics, to the officials at the Massachusetts Department of Correction, the Department of Legal Medicine, and to the head of the Harvard Social Relations Department. After a lot of hassle and red-tape cutting, the proposal was accepted; and thus began a unique and very successful experiment.

We started slowly, with small groups of three or four prisoners and two members of the Harvard group (who at this time included, in addition to Leary and myself, Dr. Allan Cohen, Dr. Alfred Alschuder, Dr. George Litwin, Dr. Ralph Metzner, Dr. Gunther Weil, and Dr. Ralph Schwitzgebel, with Dr. Madison Presnell as the medical and psychiatric adviser). We would usually work in pairs, and go to the prison twice a week, with one of the days given over to running the prisoners' psychedelic sessions, which were held in a locked room in the prison hospital, and one of the days devoted to planning future sessions or in follow-up discussions.

I am not a psychologist and it would be ridiculous if I were to attempt to give a scientific appraisal of the Harvard-Concord prison project. But one thing is certain, the sessions 'worked' in the sense that very few of the inmates who underwent the intensive LSD or psilocybin sessions ever came back (which was the whole point of the exercise). Statistically, fifty to seventy per cent of inmates paroled or released return within a five-year period, with a nationwide average of sixty-seven per cent. We found that one and a half years after the termination of our project the return rate had been reduced to seven per cent, which is a completely objective index of success. How did we achieve these results ?

After an initial discussion meeting with an inmate, when he would be told about the drugs and the kind of effects they produced, we would then meet three or four more times to plan his session. We explained to him how he would 'lose his ego' and soar off into 'non-game' worlds of experience, and how this would enable him to see himself and his criminal games with greater clarity. We also encouraged the prisoners to propose the kind of changes they would like to see happen within themselves, which might take the form of a hefty South Boston American Irishman saying 'I want to understand what drinking means to me' or a coloured inmate from Georgia 'I want to get over my paranoia'. We would also draw 'internal maps', huge circles in which we could fill in the expected positive changes and note areas of the personality best avoided in a session.

On the day of the session, we would get to the prison early, and after chatting to the guards as we moved through the different locked doors to the prison hospital, we would assemble the group of perhaps six inmates; and then all take the psychedelic—which included, of course, ourselves, since only by taking the drug with them could their fear and suspicion and paranoia be averted. The physical setting was the best we could do under the circumstances—we spread mattresses all over the floor, played taped pop and Indian music, made sure that the session would not be interrupted by visitors or guards and thus that the atmosphere would be relaxed and open and permissive.

We found that it was best not to really *do* anything during the session, except be there and give

reassurance to anyone who started getting paranoid or fearful; everyone was best left free to explore whatever material came up, whether it be entirely personal or involve personal issues with any of the others present. We found that in a benign, supportive, friendly session and with a favourable mental set on the part of each subject, the drug produced a detachment from everyday thoughts and actions which was correlative with an increase in degrees of reflectiveness and insights into normal behaviour patterns and in turn opened up the way for the construction of alternatives.

For those of us responsible for conducting the sessions, our orientation was, to quote Gerald Heard, the British philosopher who first introduced Aldous Huxley to mescaline, '... concerned but not anxious, interested but not engrossed, diagnostic but not critical, aware of the seriousness of what is being conveyed and all the more incapable of coldness or shock, aloofness or dismay'. But what about the inmate, for whom the psychedelic experience came as something not far removed from, if not actually akin to revelation? I think for the majority the experience was intense and highly emotional, with hallucinations of colours, of positive and frightening scenes; yet it apparently stimulated them to do some thinking about their lives and what they were doing with them. One inmate, who initially presented the classic picture of a 'hardened criminal' of the well-known American variety, emerged from his heavy shell as a sensitive, lonely, child-like human being. At the time when I was feeling highest I had a terrific feeling of sadness and loneliness, and a feeling of great remorse at all these wasted years ... and of the harsh and brutal things I have done in order to survive at all....' Or another, a twenty-eight-year-old coloured brother who was serving a five-year sentence for robbery and had attended a school for retarded children till the age of seventeen: 'I kept saying to myself in thought—where do you belong? Where do you belong?' And yet another inmate, a forty-eight-year-old man serving time on charges of theft, forgery, larceny and escape with a prior history of thirty arrests, the first one being at the age of twelve:

'... before taking this drug my thinking always seemed to travel in the same circles—drinking, gambling, money and sex, I guess what you'd call a fast life. Now my thoughts are troubled and at times quite confusing, but they are all of an honest nature, and of wondering. I feel somehow detached now from prison life, uninterested in gambling or even talking to the other cons, except those in the group. I think I now know what I want to be and I am sincere in my mind when I say that I want to make it so. Because the drug opened my mind and I got a better understanding of myself and also of the other people in the group, I now feel free to say and discuss things, which you generally do not do.'

(He was discharged a few months after his first session and obtained a job with a construction company; he worked ten to thirteen hours a day and one month later he was promoted to assistant foreman. A few months later he became assistant cook in a large restaurant. Ten years later he was still out and running his own auto body paint shop.)

But perhaps the most interesting of all the prisoners who took part in the project is Jimmy Kerrigan, one of the 'notorious' Kerrigan Brothers, a safe-cracker and part of the Irish mafia, who is still serving out his sentence, even as I write these lines, some twelve years after the events I have been describing. When the project terminated, which it did with Leary's dismissal from Harvard, Kerrigan continued the programme but without using drugs, and started a group within the prison called The Concord Self-Development Group to assist its members to sort out their lives' priorities and to give guidance on job-getting and how to 'go straight'. He got together this group composed of inmates, starting with the ones who had been in the drug programme who then voluntarily pledged themselves to help each other find a new direction in life that would not automatically lead straight back to prison. I recently received a brochure from Jim in which the aims of SDG are spelled out. It ends with a list of questions that each member has to ask himself, first alone and then with the rest; and 'a hypothetical case history':

#### THE PERSONAL ANALYSIS

1. AM I WILLING TO GET HONEST WITH MYSELF FOR THE PURPOSE OF GETTING TO KNOW MYSELF AND OTHERS BETTER?
2. DO I SINCERELY WANT TO HELP MYSELF?



3. DO I NEED HELP TO DO SO?
4. WHAT KIND OF HELP DO I REALLY WANT?
5. CAN I GAIN IT THROUGH THIS PROGRAMME?
6. WHAT DO I REALLY THINK OF MYSELF AS I AM NOW ?
7. WHAT ARE MY REAL MOTIVES FOR JOINING THIS GROUP?
8. WHAT CAN I HONESTLY DO TO IMPROVE MYSELF, AND AM I WILLING TO TRY?
9. CAN I VISUALISE WHAT LIFE PROBABLY HOLDS FOR ME IN THE FUTURE AS THINGS NOW STAND?
10. WHO BESIDES MYSELF CAN AID ME IN RE-ESTABLISHING A GOOD LIFE IN THE FUTURE?
11. WHAT DO I HONESTLY THINK CAUSED THE TROUBLE I AM PRESENTLY IN?
12. AM I WILLING TO EXAMINE THE CAUSES AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND THEM AS THEY REALLY ARE?
13. HOW MUCH OF MY LIFE HAS BEEN WASTED THROUGH MY OWN MISMANAGEMENT'?
14. DO I THINK AT THIS TIME MY LIFE NEEDS TO CONTINUE IN A DOWNWARD MANNER?
15. IS A VALID APPROACH TO SELF-HONESTY REALLY NECESSARY?
16. DO I WANT TO THINK POSITIVELY TOWARDS DEVELOPING MYSELF?

#### THE HYPOTHETICAL CASE HISTORY

NAME: John Doe  
 AGE: Any years  
 OCCUPATION: None  
 PROSPECTS: None  
 RELIGION: All religions  
 EXPERIENCE: Lyman, Shirley, County Jail, Y.S.D. (Youth Service Board)  
 JOB EXPERIENCE: Restaurant worker, stock boy, dishwasher, labourer  
 SCHOOLING: 6th to 10th Grade  
 ASPIRATIONS: No work, rich widow or drift and see the States, steal when necessary  
 FAMILY TIES: Mother, father, brothers, sisters, loose relationship. Rather travel or 'cut out' on one's own

#### RESULTANT SITUATION

In Concord, five years, indefinite sentence, feeding off fantasy and delusion for the most part; identified with the 'boys'; satisfied with sense of belonging to rebellious fragments of society; 'real' people are people in trouble, in jail. The rest are 'way out'. No communication via legitimate channels nor respect for norms of community.

#### THERAPY SUGGESTED

Reduction of fear, fantasy, and hang-ups, via open discussions in small group, with trained inmates (A A's; Harvard Experimental Group; Legal Medicine) who wish to pass it on. Crash programme (classes two hours; once, twice, or more often per week) towards self-development, consideration of proper goals and attainable achievements tailored to variable individual potential. Readiness for follow-up outside programme. Finally, acceptance of social norms with respect for self and others in all areas worthy of same.

It seemed to me then, as indeed it still does, that LSD can be useful if it helps a person free himself of his habitual patterns of thought or some kind of 'absolute' sense of identity in order to see aspects of his life and reality as it concerns him personally. It is useful for what it can yield in terms of self-understanding, and is fruitful if it causes someone in a bad life situation to exert himself to overcome it and learn how to adapt the new insights to his needs. I think that perhaps for the majority of the thirty or so prisoners with whom I had sessions at Concord, something happened during their experience that took them beyond the falsifications of rote-consciousness and, in time, led them individually to achieve a simple awareness and even affirmation of the world. There is a little light burning in each one of us which is something we are all too inclined to

forget, though with sometimes quite terrible consequences. And if a psychedelic-associated programme is shown to help 'hard-core' cons regain the lost light of that which makes them truly human, then it is sad when politics and unconscious attitudes work against those who would like to share something of their experience and knowledge in precisely these human areas. If we call a man an animal and then put him behind bars, we should not, after all, be too surprised if later he reacts against us with ferocity; it is perhaps significant that Charles Manson spent over fifteen years inside various jails *before* he let the society of plain and ordinary people know precisely what kind of animal they had turned him into, though our admiration can be given to such men as George Jackson, Eldridge Cleaver, Huey Newton, Jimmy Kerrigan who, despite absolutely dehumanising conditions over long periods of time, were nonetheless able to detach themselves sufficiently from the 'prison system' and keep some kind of light of humanity burning within themselves, sufficient at any rate to preserve their sanity. Perhaps mankind needs to discover a new culture of humanity before it is all too late in a world that finally submerges into deepening chaos, which will only happen if we find alarm-clocks sufficiently powerful to wake us from the sort of sleepwalking existence which nowadays passes for 'normality'.

Enough, enough; let us pass on or rather back to the Harvard of 1962 and try to understand how LSD helped spawn a 'generation of visionary maniac white mother country dope fiend rock and roll freaks'.

I had got to know Leary quite well by now; not only was I installed as a member of his household in the Boston suburb of Newton Centers but I would accompany him each day to the Harvard office, which we now ran as a sort of command headquarters for planning sessions. There had been a rapid acceleration of interest in the drug programme, and it was not long before we had a constant stream of visitors asking about LSD and psilocybin, and their availability.

But perhaps one of our most curious visitors was a young man called Walter Pahnke, who was, incidentally, both an M.D. and a Bachelor of Divinity. He was also a candidate for the Ph.D. in the Philosophy of Religion at Harvard, had studied Christian mystical literature and had established nine categories which he felt described a genuine mystical experience. It now occurred to him that if a group of extremely religious individuals were to take a psychedelic drug, then they too might also have a genuine mystical experience. He wanted to know whether Leary would help him run a drug experiment for twenty divinity school students from the Andover-Newton Theological Seminary, ten of whom would be given a psychedelic, and the other ten an amphetamine. The plan was to run the session on Good Friday in Marsh Chapel at Boston University, a long-established Methodist-affiliated institution. It was a breathtaking proposal, though it only took Tim thirty seconds to agree wholeheartedly and commit himself to planning the session.

We had by this time run or arranged over one thousand psychedelic sessions for persons from all walks of life, including fifty scientists, quite a number of artists and musicians and writers, sixty-nine full-time religious professionals. We also had a religious advisory committee that included two college deans, a divinity school president, three university chaplains, an executive of a religious foundation, a prominent religious editor, and several distinguished religious philosophers. We felt that with all this experience we could cope with any drug-associated contingencies, including this one. This particular session was to be later sensationalised in the American press as 'The Miracle of Marsh Chapel, though perhaps the only real miracle surrounding it was the one of actually getting Walter Pahnke's Ph.D. dissertation accepted.

As I was to be one of the 'guides', I was naturally very curious to meet the twenty students who had volunteered to take part in this experiment. Our first meeting took place at the Theological Seminary, and Tim began to explain a little about the physical and subjective effects of psychedelics, though none of the students, I believe, had ever taken anything stronger than an aspirin in their lives. There were one or two questions, but on the whole the group seemed relaxed if not actually looking forward eagerly to what was to become for them a most memorable Good Friday. One of their professors, Dr. Walter Clark, who had himself used psychedelics, was careful to point out that it should not be believed that psychedelic drugs are in themselves religious. He said it was a bit like organ music, which may be the means to a religious experience for some people. He also said that drugs had been used in esoteric religious rituals, from the days of antiquity right up to Boston in 1962, 'presumably as a stimulus to religious experience'.

During any profound emotional experience, he pointed out, religious or otherwise, chemical or hormonal bodily changes occur. 'Furthermore, we know that the natural chemistry of the body includes biochemical substances, known as *indoles*, which are similar in structure to the consciousness-expanding chemicals and seem to be associated with some of the same psychological states as those produced by LSD and psilocybin. The question then immediately arises whether a naturally-occurring excess of the indoles might not predispose some people to certain kinds of mystical experience or whether a mystical state of mind might not, on the other hand, stimulate chemical changes in the body.'

All the students again agreed to take part voluntarily in a systematic demonstration of the religious aspects of a psychedelic revelatory experience along the lines we had suggested. It was a double-blind experiment. The students were divided into five groups of four persons, each group with its own guide, who met with them before the session for orientation and preparation.

Finally, on the day, we all arrived at 10.00 a.m. at the Chapel. Everyone seemed serious, almost reverential, and Dr. Pahnke busied himself with the preparation of the drugs, which he was to administer. There had been a last-minute flap when Harvard University Officials, an *ad hoc* faculty group 'to advise and oversee' future drug studies, headed by Dr. Robert Bales, refused to release to the experimenters the supply of drugs held by Dr. Dana Farnsworth, head of the Harvard Health Service and one of the protagonists of the Pahnke experiment. Nevertheless, after representatives had been despatched to round up a sufficient quantity of 'non-Harvard' acid, there was enough to go round, mostly from my mayonnaise jar.

The session took place in a small, private chapel sited underneath the main building, one hour before noon on Good Friday, with the reverent sound of the story of Christ piped in by loudspeakers. The service would last for three hours and would consist of prayers, spoken meditations and readings from the Bible, periods of silent meditation, and religious music. We were asked by the minister to maintain a reverent silence during the service. My little group of four were amongst those who received the psychedelic (neither the students, guides, nor experimenter knew beforehand who received the psychedelic); but it was pretty obvious after about thirty minutes, when one of my students normally a shy, sensitive person, given to reading aloud large passages of Donne's poetry, suddenly began to tear the buttons off his jacket and declared that he was a fish. Another student had meanwhile slipped silently off the pew on to the Chapel floor, where he began to slowly gyrate like a huge snake. The other two seemed quite okay; one was sitting bolt upright, his eyes staring fixatedly at the huge crucifix on the high altar, an insane grin on his face, and with his hands clasped tightly together, as though clutching his last remaining \$5 note; whilst the fourth member lay stretched out and as stiff as a board on an empty pew, a position he somehow managed to retain during the entire service, and then only coming to again after a huge injection of Thorazine had been administered.

I finally managed to subdue the student tearing off his buttons, but not before he had removed all of them off both his coat and his trousers and thrown his dental plate at the altar, much to the surprise of the students who had been given the amphetamine, who sat huddled together in the front pews, nervous and not very sure about where their own heads were at.

There was of course quite a lot of activity going on with the other groups who had been given the drug, almost total confusion, in fact with some of the students climbing across the pews, and one actually standing facing the crucifix, arms stretched out as if somehow able to identify physically with Christ and his suffering on the cross. One student even managed to get outside the Chapel and was almost killed when he walked into the traffic on Boston's Commonwealth Avenue, 'believing he was Christ and nothing could touch him'.

Finally, at two o'clock, when the story of Christ had reached its conclusion, we all retired to an adjoining room for discussions; since many of the students were still completely under the influence of the drug, however, we decided instead that we should all drive back to Tim's house, where our girl-friends had arranged a wine-and-cheese lunch, which we could have whilst taking turns to stay with those who were still out of it.

(While most religious leaders would probably be unenthusiastic over the idea of the drugged approach to religion, *Archives of General Psychiatry* reported that earlier that year one lawsuit brought attention to a pastor who told his congregation that LSD could bring them closer to God.) For Leary, the Good Friday session was something of a personal triumph, and he began

increasingly to study literary accounts of religious ecstasies from such pens as those of Wordsworth, Tennyson, Virginia Woolf, and even C. P. Snow, as well as personal experiences from classical mystics like Teresa of Avila, van Ruysbroeck, Plotinus, and Saint Augustine; he was also at this time getting into Eastern mystical thought and read extensively from the *Tao Te Ching*, *I Ching*, Vedanta, the *Bhagavad Gita*, Christ's Sermon on the Mount, Zen, Buddhism, Sufism, Hinduism and so forth. He believed at this time that in LSD he had found a truly religious 'sacrament', and one not too different from the Vedic Soma, the Dionysian nectar, the Greek ambrosia, the Mexican mushroom, the Red Indian's peyote, or the Chama Indian's ayahuasca. 'When the day comes—as it surely will—that sacramental biochemicals like LSD will be as routinely and tamely used as organ music and incense to assist in attainment of religious experience, it may well be that the ego-shattering effect of the drug will be diminished,' he later wrote, and added 'Such may be one aspect of the paradoxical nature of religious experience.' This call for acceptance of LSD as an aid to genuine spiritual revivification was not only picked up by many people seeking answers to their own spiritual problems, but also by some of his professional colleagues who were in all other respects highly cautious scientists. Indeed, one of them, Dr. Frank Barron, a distinguished member of The Centre for Research in Personality at Berkeley, wrote the following: 'There is a new time coming, and we shall know it when it happens, when LSD is interpreted by those who use it as the source for the energy that is to transform human consciousness.'

But it must also be appreciated that part of the problem Leary faced at this time was in finding a 'model' acceptable to society at large in which LSD could be legitimately used. And religion certainly seemed more promising as a prospect than psychology, despite the drug's promise as an 'adjunct' to psychotherapy, prisoner rehabilitation, and the treatment of alcoholics; besides which, he was coming in for considerable criticism from many sectors of the American academic community, where it was widely believed that the drug sessions at Harvard were being run nonchalantly and irresponsibly. Dr. Herbert C. Kelman, a lecturer in Social Psychology at Harvard, reported he had observed that graduate students who had had LSD experiences had formed a clannish 'insider group', and wrote: 'I doubt whether this project is carried out primarily as an intellectual endeavour or whether it is being pursued as a new kind of experience to offer an answer to man's ills.' John U. Monroe, dean of Harvard College, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Harvard Crimson* newspaper, warning of 'the effects of LSD, psilocybin, mescaline and other mind-distorting drugs,' which '... have been known to intensify seriously a tendency toward depression and to produce other dangerous psychotic effects.'

Yet religion was still very much a new area for Leary. I think his scientific training was the source of his thoroughness and even of his originality as a talker, for on the whole he did not always write very well. There was always a hint of journalism in what he wrote, a too-easy tendency to slacken off for long passages at a time, into just something not far removed from the jargon of the hipster, and the related facility that suggests, if not exactly knowingness, at least a feeling that he is never at a loss, an essentially 'olympian' preparation. He was a follower of Mao and Dionysus, Freud and Epicurus, and this was never more apparent than when he tried to define the religious situation. It was difficult to take him seriously as a 'prophet' or a 'holy man' or a 'high priest'; it was easier to see him as an inspired impresario, an Apollinaire, or a Cocteau. Yet he sought to find a common ground on which both science and religion could meet.

'Science is a social system which evolves roles, rules, values, language, space-time locations to further the quest for these goals—these answers. Religion is a social system which has evolved its roles, rules, rituals, values, language, space-time locations to further the pursuit of the same goals—the revelatory experience. A science which fails to address itself to these spiritual goals, which accepts other purposes (however popular), becomes secular, political, and tends to oppose new data. A religion which fails to provide direct experiential answers to these spiritual questions becomes secular, political and tends to oppose the individual revelatory confrontation.'

He found it hard to see how his results—which read: seventy-five per cent 'spiritual revelation'—could be disregarded by those who were professionally concerned with spiritual matters and individual religious development. But disregard them they did.

Thus, far from convincing everybody that the New Religion is really dedicated to the idea that we should only think of ways in which to bring-each other up, not down, he only succeeded in putting up people's backs. The problem was to find a sufficient number of people left who would listen to what he had to say. And part of this difficulty was due to a lack of austerity in the presentation, which alone guaranteed- public discussion though not necessarily of a kind calculated to produce either consensus or rational inquiry. Yet despite Leary's various resources of honesty and intelligence, his quest for understanding must in some sense be a frustrating one. Whatever his ideas or ideals, no two authorities seemed to agree with one another and each would be the first to declare that he alone spoke with authority. 'Lots of blacksmiths whose monopoly is threatened.'

Leary felt that LSD's significance lay beyond all social analysis and all psychological categories and, since the drug experience was completely unique, a new model was needed, a new structure. It presupposed a readiness on the part of those who used it to undertake a series of new departures, perpetual readiness to expose oneself to new mental dimensions, even to new forms of 'reality'. In that sense, no two sessions are ever the same; each one provides an entirely personal, and at times, highly idiosyncratic encounter with the self, with each person becoming his own explorer. So that each session acts as a bridge between one reality and another, and to the internal voyager represents perhaps an attempt to penetrate into the deeper reality below the externals of egocentric consciousness. And thus the voyager returns, bringing back an inventive fertility and diversity of experiences to talk about, to illustrate, through art, through words, through music, through being.

As a serious writer, Leary had to throw away the chance of seducing readers or listeners with too ready-made a view of human categories. Again and again he demanded that the reader, too, open himself to the new and unfamiliar, as indeed he had done himself. He began to speak of 'Man's Fifth Freedom—the freedom to use your own head and on your own terms', and of 'The Politics of Consciousness Expansion'. And the more he used words, the less the clarity of expression. 'We must entertain nonverbal methods of communication if we are to free our nervous system from the tyranny of the stifling simplicity of words,' he wrote in an article published in *The Harvard Review*. He wanted the freedom to live close to the hermetic and the incommunicable and even to the refusal of all language. Certainly, within those of us using LSD, it was developing a new sensibility, a new awareness, there was something wholesome about it, something healthy and vital. It had laid claim to new areas of its own, and we wanted to share our knowledge with the world. Verbal tricks were out. We had to make of our language an entirely new instrument of communication, something to be undertaken in the spirit of renewal, with a kind of reverence which you find in acts of faith. The freedom we sought was not the freedom to say or do what we liked, but freedom as a value (internal freedom), something intangible yet also somehow more real. We saw that the traditional means for expanding or contracting consciousness such as the printing press, the television screen, the radio transmitter, the movies, were restricted by law and remained under government control. How then were we to change this situation? For the purposes of describing the psychedelic experience in 1962, he had no language, no trained operators, just a vision that a new language would inevitably develop to transfigure every one of our social forms.

'It is possible that in twenty years our psychological and experiential language (pitifully small in English) will have multiplied to cover realms of experience and forms of thinking now unknown. In twenty years, every social institution will have been transformed by the new insights provided by consciousness-expanding experiences. Many new social institutions will have developed to handle the expressions of the potentiated nervous system.' (Leary).

Perhaps because poetry is most responsive to the change of human sensibility or awareness, and is the only true advance guard of language today, much of the new 'visionary' poetry is written in lines of simple word associations, that is, with the poet taking his ease among words; he prefers a limpid image which floats rather than runs, an image more natural than precise, and in general strives for a direct, less intellectual expression or emotion. He sees the manipulative verbal machinery for what it is, an ego-oriented, aggressive, goal-oriented, fear-ridden, guilty, unconscious use of language. According to the American poet, Gerde Stern, 'In a world of

simultaneous operations you don't have to be first to be on top. We are dealing with word as it exists in our own world as an object in sight and sound. This is a unique role for the word, which before our time has been a thing of thought and breath or written and printed on paper, more of a private experience than in public media like billboards, signs, radio and television. Most people still long for a world of one-thing-at-a-timeness.'

But it was not only true for poets. Artists, too, were having to readjust their work to match their new insights, find new forms of expression, use novel techniques to describe this brave new world of sensory experience. They needed an art that would reflect a deeper layer of consciousness; colour and especially shape or form became in themselves more meaningful than any object they might represent. 'Photographic' imitations of appearances were less interesting than patterns of colour which have a power to move us and in ways which we little understand. The psychedelic artist was 'aware' of sensory patterns in the intense way that the Tantric artist is; that is, he created his art out of whatever it was that he had discovered within himself, which in turn was commensurate with an increase in degrees of reflectiveness. The artist who 'turned on' to his own psychosomatic body wanted to recreate this experience immediately in visual terms which electricity made possible. He was no longer surface-bound to a piece of canvas or to imitations of the world of external appearances for he had become more universal—now he could soar off into these new sensory realms of human experience. He understood the meaning of such words as 'liberation' and 'freedom', not only with reference to his own life but in the life of his art. And he knew that the visible form would have to be a direct expression of the 'electric' 'pulsating' centre of which he had become aware. Thus it might seem to those who saw art as simply 'images' or aspects of nature, that the psychedelic artist—who flooded the room with colour, movement, sound, and light—was unconcerned with outer form, and of course they were right. For psychedelic art is expressive of an inner rhythm, like that of music. And the spectator who is not possessed of a self-consciousness similar to the artist's, will never understand what response is expected of him. For the psychedelic artist is learning how to make himself part of the mystery of his own being by 'seeing' it, living in it; here can be no sense of separatedness, no difference between 'Me' and 'Thee'—'We are all one,' he says; 'the art, the spectator, and the artist are one. Threefold Always.'

This may go some way to explaining the widespread use of psychedelics at pop concerts, for truly great pop music must present a frame to enable the spectator to merge with the sound and the colour, and the musician achieves authenticity by means of the language of 'visual music' expressed in the beauties of his world of electronic simultaneities (Jimi Hendrix).

It would be a mistake simply to dismiss this New High Art as an art of naiveté, mental or logical deficiency, or general benightedness since it presupposes that the spectator has also been able to move beyond his ordinary relative vision and is thus able to get into the invisible forces within his own deepest self in order to 'see more seeingly'. And it is the psychedelic experience that frees one, albeit temporarily, of any 'absolute' sense of identity in order that one may soar off into the flux.

The psychedelic artist would rather see his art as something that arose out of the alembic of self, as a piece of reality salvaged out of the flux, which manifested itself in his consciousness from the hidden depths of his being, somewhat similar to the cave paintings of primitive man, which also arose out of the experience of living. He is trying to express something in a non-conceptual, highly-figurative and often emotive way, through symbols which may themselves be magical, i.e. that have the power to *turn us on*.

The psychedelic artists had found a means of communicating directly what they had experienced internally. But what of the rest of us ? As Leary put it—

'We are, in a real sense, prisoners of our cognitive concepts and strategies. Passed on from generation to generation. The cognitive continuity of history. Our current reliance upon substantive and "closing-off" concepts will be the amused wonder of coming generations.

'The danger is not physical or psychological, but social political. Make no mistake: the effect of consciousness-expanding drugs will be to transform our concepts of human nature, of human potentialities, of existence. The game is about to be changed, ladies and gentlemen. Man is about to make use of that fabulous electrical network he carries around in his skull. Present social establishments had better be prepared for the change. Our favourite concepts

are standing in the way of a floodtide, two billion years building up.

'Let's try a metaphor. The social situation in respect to consciousness-expanding drugs is very similar to that faced sixty years ago by those crackpot visionaries who were playing around with the horseless carriage. Of course, the automobile is external child's play compared to the unleashing of cortical energy, but the social dilemma is similar.'

(It was this particular passage which finally convinced the Harvard hierarchy that Professor Leary was now obviously suffering from *real* hallucinations and that he had to go!)

'The claim was made in 1900 that the motor carriage, accelerated to speeds several times that of the horse-drawn vehicle, would revolutionise society. Impossible to conceptualise because in 1900 we possessed no concepts for these possibilities. But we always have the standard objections to the non-conceptual. First of all, we object to the dangers: high speeds will snap nervous minds, gas fumes are fatal, the noise will prevent cows from giving milk, horses will run away, criminals will exploit the automobile.

'Then the puritanical objection: people will use cars for pleasure, for kicks.

'Then we question the utility: what can we do with speedy carriages ? There are no men to repair them. There are no roads, few bridges. There are no skilled operators. The supply of fuel is small. Who will sell you gas ?

'Then we raise the problem of control: who should be allowed to own and operate these powerful and dangerous instruments ? Perhaps they should be restricted to the government elite, to the military, to the medical profession.

'But why do we want cars anyway ? What is wrong with the good old buggy ? What will happen to coachmen, blacksmiths, carriage-makers?

'The automotive visionary of 1900 could have pointed out that his sceptical opponent had no concepts, no social structures to implement these possibilities. Remember, if one talks about experiences and prospects for which the listener has no concepts, then he is defined (at best) as a mystic. Our automotive mystic sixty years ago would have asserted the need for a new language, new social forms, and would have predicted that our largest national industry would inevitably develop out of this vision.

'Can you imagine a language without such words as convertible, tudor sedan, General Motors, U.A.W., Standard Oil, superhighway, parking ticket, traffic court? These most commonplace terms in our present culture were mystical images three generations ago.

'The political issue involves control: automobile means that the free citizen moves *his* own car in external space. Internal automobile. Auto-administration The freedom and control of one's experiential machinery. Licensing will be necessary. You must be trained to operate. You must demonstrate your proficiency to handle consciousness-expanding drugs without danger to yourself or the public.

'A final hint to those who have ears to hear. The open cortex produces an ecstatic state. The nervous system operating free of learned abstraction is a completely adequate, completely efficient, ecstatic organ. To deny this is to rank man's learned tribal concepts above two billion years' endowment. An irreverent act. Trust your inherent machinery. Be entertained by the social game you play. Remember, man's natural state is ecstatic wonder, ecstatic intuition, ecstatic accurate movement. Don't settle for less.' (The Politics of Conscience Expansion', Harvard Review, Vol. I No. 4, Pages 33-37.)

I think Leary was most prophetic when he noted one of the occupational hazards of the LSD game—'You are more likely to find the evolutionary agents closer to jail than the professor's chair.' It is true, of course, that unlike more traditional occupations, the LSD one is not one in which you normally get smoother and smoother with experience, like a doctor's: it is (to use Leary's metaphor of the automobile) nearer to motor-racing, in that the changes are so rapid, the curves so sudden, and demands an immediacy of response, a quality of sheer nerve—attributes not often maintained indefinitely at top pitch. Perhaps it is all part of the pilgrim's progress which, though undoubtedly preferable in many respects to the poverty endured by Renoir and Pissaro, Blake and Artaud, is likely to destroy more talents, in the end, than it nurtures. And here again, we began to get echoes back from different parts of the world, from people who seemed able to identify with the message we were sending out. I still keep a letter we received

from Alfred Schmielewski Yogi, the Siddha Guru from Canada, who had no doubts about the efficacy of psychedelics: 'Psychedelic drugs,' he wrote, 'are the breakthrough of the ages and represent an all-important contribution to racial history. Here seems to exist after a billion years of unconscious evolution an instrument that man can use to establish control of racial unconsciousness. Man can now say that the race can control itself, its unconscious processes. This discovery will be the birth hour of the cosmic history of the human species. With this instrument, man can conquer the stars.'

Another related area, though not necessarily always drug-related, was being developed brilliantly by Ronnie Laing, M.D., in London, and Joseph Berke, M.D., in New York, namely, the exploration of the experience of 'going-into-madness', with madness being seen as 'a fundamental human experience rooted in an untenable intrapsychic and interpersonal situation.' The possibilities for madness as enlightenment could now be discussed.

Joe wrote to me about some of this, and said he was trying to get a course together at FUNY (Free University of New York) in which 'madness will be seen as a key to understanding the entire panorama of "psychopathology".'

Whilst it was possible for us to observe that the drug research area was one composed of a wide range of *sub rosa* activity, utopian dreams, mystical aspirations, and ordinary vague enthusiasm, interpenetrated by a certain atmosphere of personal life-renewal, we also believed that young people, particularly intellectuals and artists, were looking increasingly inward and back into their archetypal past, turning, as it were, towards the inner life via the use of mind-altering substances, just as in the thirties many young intellectuals turned to the inner life via the church. But what sort of church? And what sort of a religion could contain the 'LSD sacrament' ? Increasingly, it seemed, the answers to these questions were coming from the East, most particularly from Tibet, through the esoteric teachings of the Great Mantra and spinning-top sound of the universe: OM MANI PADME HUM.

We found that many of the visionary states expressed in the Tibetan doctrines described states of consciousness which compared favourably with induced visionary states recorded by many of our religious-minded subjects. And in the Mahayana Buddhist text *Bardo Thodol*, we found a most accurate description of the 'going-out-of-the-body' experiences as well as an entire symbology of 'ego-death' and 'rebirth'; it was, after all, a Tibetan instruction manual for the preparation of one's own death, the offices of afterlife, and instructions for rebirth. We found these Tibetan images and thought patterns conducive to flexible thought, and we began to discuss such matters as incarnation, 'white light', death, without embarrassment. Of this apparent unself-conscious use of highly-charged, emotive, tabu words and worlds, Richard Alpert once told a magazine reporter: 'Two years ago, if a guy came to me, like they do now, talking funny, I would have thought he was nuts. But what is a nut ? They're all on the same journey to the East that we are. They may come as a guy with a beard and a motorcycle or a Tibetan Lama. But we're in communication with everyone asking questions: What does it mean to truly be ? What is man's potential ?' And of the *Bardo Thodol* (*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*), Gerald Heard wrote that it provided a method:

'which can give us essential aid and guidance in and for the most vital and most neglected phase of our lives.... But however necessary it is that our American and, indeed, all our "modernised" societies be taught how to get over our death phobia and so to be freed from the ridiculous tabu-dishonesties whereby we attempt to disguise our rightful exit, we shall not try this method and undergo this training unless we can be reassured on two points, unless two quite sensible questions can be answered, two rational objections be met.

The first is: "How can a Westerner accept the Buddhist, oriental, pessimistic, pre-modern, pre-scientific view of life: namely, that the best thing to do with it is to get rid of it?"

The second question runs: "Granted, that out of the psychological methods developed by Buddhism a valid terminal therapy could be extracted, what use could that therapy be to any but the old ?"

In 1962, the youngest and most typical Westerner, the American, was the most sincere of human beings. His potentialities were unlimited, and in a world of growth they had a right to existence. He was moving into a new age, a new culture of sincerity; the harmony based on heteronomy of



the adult society was to become transformed into one based on autonomy, when everyone could do his own thing and not be thought of as either dangerous or crazy, and that all truth which was accepted previously on the strength of authority would in future become personal recognition through the development of personal self-consciousness. If man is to stand on his own two feet, autonomous, completely responsible for everything that he wills, thinks and does, then he must be completely conscious of his causes and reasons. He would have to develop a system of thought that deals with true bondage in a true world, whilst at the same time aim for the spiritual state of no-game, no-ego, the ultimate liberation and the very highest forms of maturity. Only along such a path can a new order develop, the OM-HUM of presence and loving process. After 150 years of fanatical exactitude in his conquest of the world of appearances, Western man was starting to discover that he could explore inwardness; though of significance he knew little as yet. But having once perceived it as a possibility at all, then he would use his ingenuity to find perfect expression for it, and establish the perfect harmony between essential being and the world of external phenomena. The affective spiritual state was not to be found in the great institutions of theology, which in fact no one inhabits, but there, inside the self. He found in his confrontation with the 'Void', things which alone disclosed the nature of reality to him. He was no longer a stranger to himself, a cipher lost on the face of an inhuman universe, a puppet furnished with a name.

(Excerpt from a post-session Report):

'This was the deepest drug state. Things became confused as to time and sequence. I have almost no recall of what I was seeing at this time, and only feeling was important. I was seeing *something*. It seemed that when I cried a whole new world unfolded and the fascination with the figure was lost. I became part of a vast universe, drawing my energy from the earth. The order of things and in things became very clear. Love and hate were very important as I entered this state and seemed to be clawing at my back in order to gain control of the very core of me, a brilliant spinning core of energy. From here, probably as a result of being able to cry. I began contemplating the infinite sorrow of being alone. I felt, however, that infinite sorrow was the key to open the door of understanding, like washing the eyes so you could see. I felt if you could suffer an infinite amount of sorrow and be patient enough to wait an eternity, you could understand the meaning of things. However, for me in this state, finding the real meaning of the world no longer seemed important, but only being part of it myself, a dot in the cosmos, and feeling the complete harmony of everything, both inside and outside, and knowing that because there was such complete order I did not have to worry about myself. There was a sense of a lack of gravity and I was spinning, or rather spinning and floating at the same time around the earth, something like a satellite. I felt comfortable here in spite of the knowledge that from here I could not communicate with others because all people were One and a part of the vast energy of the world, as I was. Energy simply is; it exists but has no capacity or wish of communication; it has no way of communicating. Death of the body was not important here. It was a very wonderful feeling to be able to give my energy back to the earth where it had originally come from.'

Clearly, after such an experience there could be no return to a culture based on authority and blind surrender to a regime where personal opinion is largely erroneous. Courage and truthfulness, and they alone, accelerate the processes of evolution. It is in the nature of things that even our mistakes must turn into blessings, which presupposes a morality in the universe somewhere. And any crudeness is largely due to our sincerity. We do not know, as they do in Bengal, how to unite externally metaphysical truth and telling lies, or, like the Chinese, how to maintain outer face without breach of faith, without even questioning to what extent it corresponds to inner personal truths. Accordingly, loyalty to one's own private beliefs and empirical truthfulness are among our highest ideals.

We had a lot of convincing testimony by people, impressively intelligent where academic and worldly achievements are concerned, which encouraged us to believe that in LSD we had a new chemical tool for human expression and development.

Although the comments and reflections are quite diverse, we felt on the basis of our evidence that, in the aggregate, the appeal is one in which humanistic values prevail. So far from the LSD

experience necessarily being the withdrawal of the mind from reality, it brought it, for certain people, once again into an enriched everyday life. And for some of us working with LSD at Harvard during this time, we believed we had found a means, on a manageable scale, with which our Western kind of civilisation could be renewed by the discovery of new mysteries, by the undemocratic but sovereign power of the human imagination, by the undemocratic power which makes poets the unacknowledged legislators of mankind, the power which makes all things new. We could feel somehow that we were involved in nothing less than 'The Great Work of Magical Self-Liberation' of the Tibetan doctrine when the eyes of the spirit would become one with the eyes of the body, and God would be in us, not outside. *Entheos: enthusiasm*: that was the essence of our 'unholy madness'. And how far Harvard was from that ideal was the measure of the defeat of the American Dream.

It seemed the more we studied the reports, the more we realised that no quick rational explanation would suffice to cover the range of the emotional power of LSD on the human psyche. Everything suggested LSD had a different meaning for different people, a different meaning for different professions, and even a different meaning for different social classes; people seemed to take it to fill their own particular needs.

The only intellectual danger, it seemed to me, was a tendency on the part of many subjects afterwards to convert the 'inner world' they saw into a cosy fiction. Yet the moment of illumination, the creative vision, the ecstatic encounter, the experience of true insight, is essentially brief; once achieved and expressed, one is again back on square one, a victim, like everyone else, to the merciless vision of our sceptical intelligence, or ambushed by stagnation (*stasis*) and depression. I also had personal reservations about the claims made on behalf of LSD that it was the *key* to the religious or mystical state or could lead to a truer metaphysics of being. In 1962, despite perhaps a hundred LSD sessions, I could still say with Flaubert, that 'I am a mystic and I believe in nothing', or echo the modern French existentialist, Coiran, who said that 'Once we have ceased linking our secret life to God, we can ascend to ecstasies as affective as those of the mystics and conquer this world without recourse to the beyond.' For there is no evidence that LSD ever made nor marred a saint. Certainly, 'turning on' was interesting for its usefulness, for what it could reveal in terms of a creative understanding to those who used the psychedelic experience for their own purposes, and could benefit from such knowledge. But real courage and a tremendous sensitivity of mind is needed if one is going to hurl oneself into a madness that is *not sacred*, since the *real* temptation, it seemed to me, is to link the psychedelic experience to God and prepare to return to that Garden of which, through no fault of our own, we have lost even the memory. But if reality still counts for something, then the psychedelic voyager had to become a *practical dualist*, whatever be the non-dual philosophical doctrines to which he intellectually subscribes. It is true that at certain peak moments during an intensive LSD session, it is only the *Clear Light of the Void* that alone *is*. One transcends at such moments the dichotomy set up in one's mind between 'inner' and 'outer' worlds of experience, and sees reality only from the standpoint of the mystical vision, of the *Brahman*; and may experience life beyond all dualism. But after such a trip, when the mountains are again the mountains, and the lakes are again the lakes, there is still the empirical world to be dealt with; it doesn't disappear like the Cheshire Cat, leaving only an insane grin on your face.

The very nature of the psychedelic experience makes it capable of producing apparently impossible effects—hallucinations are things which are impossible, which can yet somehow be felt as real. LSD exerts an influence over consciousness by virtue of its proximity in the blood stream, but there is nothing whatsoever *about* LSD; it cannot exert volition on its own; indeed, there is a case for saying it is itself unconcerned.

Consciousness responds to its influence. This is analogous to what is called in chemistry catalytic action. The catalytic substance influences another by its presence but remains unaffected itself. LSD is in this sense an efficient but not instrumental cause of heightened self-consciousness; but the real powers of consciousness are *will, knowledge, action*: these are the great triangle of energy, which is something known to every Tantric yogin.

There was an attempt by Leary, Alpert and Metzner to start a new religion based on the psychedelic experience, which found its theoretical expression in their authorship of *The Psychedelic Experience*, a manual based on *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. They had adapted the classic work of Evans-Wentz on the *Bardo* plane, according to Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup's

English rendering; but in such a way as to turn it into a guidebook for psychedelic sessions. It contained technical comments about: The Period of Ego loss (First Bardo): The Period of Hallucinations (Second *Bardo*): The Period of Re-entry (Third *Bardo*), following the Tibetan model.

*'The first period (Chikhai Bardo) is that of complete transcendence—beyond words, beyond space-time, beyond self. There are no visions, no sense of self, no thoughts. There are only pure awareness and ecstatic freedom from all game (and biological) involvements ('games' here are behavioural sequences defined by roles, rules, rituals, goals, strategies, values, language, characteristic space-time locations and characteristic patterns of movement. Any behaviour not having these nine features is non-game: this includes physiological reflexes, spontaneous play, and transcendent awareness). The second (lengthy) period involves self, or external game reality (Chonyid Bardo)—in sharp, exquisite clarity or in the form of hallucinations (karmic apparitions). The final period (Sidpa Bardo) involves the return to routine game reality and the self.... For the unprepared, the heavy game players, those who anxiously cling to their egos, and for those who take the drug in a nonsupportive setting, the struggle to regain reality begins early and usually lasts to the end of their session.'*

In other words, its authors suggested that we die, creatively speaking, when we cling too fast to the definite. But if you cling too long to any idea, even to the idea of LSD as a means of human transcendence, it can become a chain like any other. There were times when I felt we had forged an 'LSD chain' around all our necks; our problem was were we ever going to remove it? The Tibetan idea of 'ego death' leading to 'conscious' experiences in the after-world, with the possibilities inherent in that situation of selective re-lives, was a very appealing one, though it reminded me a little of the Irishman of 102, who, on being asked the secret of his longevity, said that we should 'choose our parents very, very carefully'. It seemed that the spirit generated in the generation of the early sixties was of a certain hopefulness in the possibilities of *consciously* making of their future something beautiful rather than brave. The origins of the Movement are thus in the loving direction of concord, better human understanding, and brotherly love.

Brotherhood: each person  
owns nothing but the whole.

might stand for our motto at that time. Sublime optimism or sublime nonsense ? Who can really say for sure ? And for the rest . . . let me just add the only man who managed to live without money was Robinson Crusoe. Therefore, Practical Dualism Always! ought to be the slogan of our new psychedelinquent youth movement, I believe.

Soon enough, the summer came, the conjunction of my planets suggested change. For a little rest and recuperation I went to Jamaica, accompanied by my girl-friend, Karen, with whom I had been living for most of my time in Massachusetts. Tim, Richard Alpert, Ralph Metzner, George Litwin, and indeed the majority of the other members of the Harvard Psychedelic Project, took off for Mexico, more precisely, to coastal Zihuatanejo, there to start an LSD colony along the lines outlined in Aldous Huxley's book *Island*. It was history's first organised LSD youth colony. And a report from George Dusheck appeared in the San Francisco *News-Call Bulletin*, part of which I reproduce now:

'Dr. J. J. (Jack) Downing, a top San Mateo County psychiatrist and LSD experimenter, was among twenty Americans expelled from Zihuatanejo by Mexican authorities June 16.

'Dr. Downing himself has treated about forty alcoholics with the mindboggling drug at San Mateo County General Hospital, with "hopeful" results, as the *News-Call Bulletin* reported last January.

'He was not, however, a member of the International Federation for Internal Freedom, sponsors of the Zihuatanejo LSD colony. Dr. Downing was there, in his own words, "as an observer and investigator of the group treatment situation.... "

'The colonists were sedate, professional people, he reported. "There were no beatniks among them," he said. "The majority of them were successful people, who seemed to have a

religious or self-improvement motivation in being there."

' "Zihuatanejo is a middle-class Acapulco," said Dr. Downing. "The very rich go to Acapulco, those moderately well off go up the coast . . . about 120 miles north . . . to Zihuatanejo."

'There Dr. Timothy Leary and Dr. Richard Alpert, both former Harvard psychologists, set up a Mexican branch of IFIF, headquartered in Boston.

'The colonists, screened from thousands of applicants, paid \$200 a month for food and lodging, lived in one of several bungalows above a beautiful white beach, dotted with palm trees and cabanas.

' "There was an open-air dining room," Dr. Downing observed. "The funicular, a little railroad going down to the beach, didn't run, so we had to walk. There was lots of fresh fish, caught in the bay by Zihuatanejo fishermen. The staff was friendly and casual. The setting is lovely."

'There are four rooms to a bungalow, he said. One of these was set aside for group LSD sessions. Every morning two to five persons would gather in this room, with Hindu prints on the wall, and Hindu woven prints on two double mattresses and boxsprings on the floor. The LSD companions, including one member of the IFIF staff, would swallow liquid LSD and plunge into the dream world of visions, mind-expansion, self-awareness and mystical ecstasy.

'The staff consisted of Dr. Leary, who was busy most of the time screening applications—more than 5000 were received from all over North America—and fending off the curious officials of the Mexican immigration service; Ralph Metzner, a pharmacologist, and his wife, Susan, twenty-two.

'One of these sat with the LSD group, taking the drug also, so as to be *simpatico*. Those who take LSD and "sail", as the saying goes, believe that only users can understand those who are taking it.

'The dosage was heavy: 100 to 500 micrograms. More than 300 micrograms is considered an overwhelming dose by most experienced pharmacologists and psychiatrists. There are twenty-two grams to an ounce, and a million micrograms to a gram. Thus, enough LSD to cover the head of a pin can send one off like an Atlas rocket.

'As the hours wore on, the group . . . possibly consisting of an actress, a magazine writer, an alcoholic businessman, and Mrs. Metzner . . . would exchange visions, cry out at sudden insights of omnipotence and glory, listen to a motley collection of records. Gradually, towards four or five o'clock in the afternoon, the effect of the drug would wear off, and the drug therapees would emerge one by one into the bright Mexican evening.

'For those not taking LSD, the day was relaxed and endless: Breakfast at 11.00 a.m., lunch at 3.00 p.m., dinner at 9.00 p.m.

' "The atmosphere was highly unusual," Dr. Downing reports. "People accepted one another without suspicion or anxiety. They seemed very open, very relaxed."

'Even when immigration officials, embarrassed by stories of the LSD Paradise in the Mexican press, moved in to close the IFIF colony on June 12, nobody was upset.

' "Dr. Leary was very calm. He went to Mexico City to seek a modification of the order, but when he failed, took defeat without bitterness," said Dr. Downing.

'They all left for Mexico City on Sunday, June 16, on a special DC-3 chartered by immigration officers. The Zihuatanejo experiment had begun on May 1.

' "Six weeks is too short a period to measure any results," said Dr. Downing. "It must be regarded as a ruined experiment. My own view is that Leary and Alpert have developed techniques of potential value. But I do not agree with them that LSD should be available to all who want it. It is a potent, potentially dangerous drug, and should be used on an experimental basis only, by qualified professional researchers."

Meanwhile, back in Jamaica, life had become quite idyllic for Karen and myself; we had rented a beach house at Seven Miles, in the grounds of the Copacabana Club, a popular hang-out and

dancing place for people from Kingston. There was a garden ablaze with flowers, and hanging-plants around a veranda, from which we had a view over the ocean and of the Blue Mountains behind the house. There was also a small pool for a swim after coming back from surfing. Karen and I swam, and dug our limbs in the sand, made pilgrimages into the bush and to the tops of mountains, lived very close to nature, with the sun continually warming both body and mind. Already we began to yawn for the future of mankind.

But is it possible to get bored with a panorama that is the same virtually every day? It seemed to me after only a couple of months of Jamaican weather, that the sky remained an unvaried bright-clear blue and the sun a bright orange furnace every day; and I began to yearn for the varieties of nature you find in Europe. The pull of home was too great. I had to find a means of returning, somehow.

Accordingly, I wrote a letter to Eileen Garrett, a friend, the President of the New York Parapsychology Foundation and a celebrated medium, who was extremely wealthy. I suppose my letter was in some sense a call for assistance, which she responded to immediately by sending me a first-class air ticket to Nice, and a cable to say that her chauffeur would pick me up and take me to 'Le Piol', the headquarters of the Parapsychology Foundation in France.

When I arrived at Nice airport a few days later I was indeed met by a chauffeur and taken to what seemed to be a four-star restaurant, just outside St. Paul-de-Vence. But I was quickly reassured by seeing Mrs. Garrett, who welcomed me and explained that she had built the restaurant herself, 'to pay the bills', and there were a number of chalets in the grounds for guests of her Foundation. After several days there, during which I met a number of very interesting people, including the Professor of Psychiatry at Edinburgh University, George Carstairs, who had written a monograph earlier on *Daru* (a potent distilled alcohol derived from the flowers of the mahwa tree) and *Bhang* (the Indian name for *Cannabis indica*) as a 'choice of intoxicant' in a village in Rajasthan. We also discussed other names in both India and elsewhere by which Cannabis is known—*bhang*, *charas*, *ganja*, *kif*, *takroui*, *kabak*, *hashish-el-k if*, *djoma*, *dagga*, *Samba*, *grifta*, *marijuana*, *pot*, and even the American name—*shit*. But, alas, he was not holding at the time, which ever name you called it.

Anyway, the outcome of my stay at 'Le-Piol' was that Mrs. Garrett gave me a foundation cheque in the amount of \$3000 to write a report on the Harvard-Concord Prison Project, which interested her.

I was thus able to return to London, cable a ticket for Karen in Jamaica; as it also enabled us to spend a very pleasant autumn in a basement flat in Brompton Square. I did manage to complete the prison paper and sent it off to New York; my only acknowledgement was from the secretary of the Parapsychology Foundation, who replied saying that my monograph read as 'if it had come out of an "atomiser"'; and was a 'literary work' by which, as a scientist, the secretary was not much impressed.

After a few months, with the grant money nearly spent, Karen and I decided to return to America, this time to New York, with plans for setting up a 'foundation for mind research' called The Agora Scientific Trust Inc., where the 'Agora' in Greek times was a market-place, only in this case it was a 'market-place' for ideas about the nature of human consciousness.

## The Man Who Turned on the World

Michael Hollingshead

### 4. The Exile's Re-Return

1963

Once more I wandered through the gigantic city of New York, and the busy arteries of Manhattan and its mighty Central Park. It was January. And it felt good to be back.

I had had quite a few new ideas since leaving Harvard about extending the availability of LSD to new groups, organisations, and selected individuals, which might lead to locating space for the psychedelic experience in modern American society. It was clear that if psychedelics were to enter into proper competition for society's mandate, we would need some kind of structure

to disseminate our new knowledge. The need for a legal framework into which psychedelics could be smoothly fitted was very great indeed, for non-medical use of these drugs, including LSD, was *not* yet governed by the Food and Drug Act—and if we were to use our legal advantages in a collaborative way, and fast, we might be able to get a project off the ground and circulating through inner space before the law finally got round to outlawing their use or amended the Act to prevent their use for religious purposes.

An American legal authority, Roy C. Bates, writing about 'Psychedelics and the Law'—what he called 'A Prelude in Question Marks'—comments on the situation of about this time, as follows:

'It may seem far-fetched but would be altogether in accord with the (Federal) Constitution to organise a group as a church, with the prospect of privilege.'

And he based this observation on a decision by the Honourable Yale McFate in 1960 in favour of a member of the Navajo Indian Tribe appealing a charge of illegal possession of peyote, a sacramental food of the Native American Church. There was also another Navajo-peyote case on the books: it was decided on July 26, 1962, by the United States District Court of Appeals, District of Columbia Circuit (Washington), to declare a section of the Code of Indian Tribal Offences—'Peyote Violations' 'null and void, invalidly authorised and unconstitutional'.

As to such religious practices, William Blake (b. 1757) has this to say: 'I then asked Ezekiel why he ate dung, and lay so long on his right side and left side. He answered, 'The desire of raising other men into a perception of the infinite; this the North American tribes' practice.' (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*).

Bates also noted that

'Inner space law today (1963) is in the stage of underdevelopment outer space law was in A.D. 1903 when the Brothers Wright launched their airplane at Kittyhawk or, perhaps, when the Brothers Montgolfier ascended in the first air balloon, a hundred years earlier. Until it has matured, scholars in search of external on behalf of internal freedom will feel frustrated. They may believe themselves to be fugitives from injustice but in truth are victims of legal confusion engendered by the reversal of scientific objects, from the universe without to the universe within. Until psychedelics have found their place in law, a good many concrete questions will not be answerable with confidence.'

Tim Leary had also taken note of the legal uncertainty surrounding the use of psychedelic substances, and working independently in Cambridge, Mass., started a unique organization called 'IFIF' (International Federation for Internal Freedom) to preach the gospel that man's salvation lies in the expansion of his own consciousness—that the fruits, which hitherto have fallen only to the lot of him who renounces the world, can now be shared by him who partakes of the LSD sacrament, and that, no matter how little happiness can be regarded as the goal of individual human aspiration, it is yet the best means to its attainment. They sited the IF-IF offices on Storey Street—two blocks from Harvard Square. 'We welcome anyone interested,' Alpert wrote in *The Harvard Crimson*. While Alpert continued to conduct his course in motivation at Harvard for undergraduates and graduates, and Leary taught his graduate seminars in research methods, IF-IF staff took care of enquiries, official correspondence, and mailing packets of literature to Harvard undergraduates, graduate students, faculty and anyone interested anywhere in the country. There was an application blank for membership in IF-IF (dues \$10 per year), an 'Agreement to Indemnify and Hold Harmless'.

#### AGREEMENT TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS

For good and valuable consideration, including access to the literature and other facilities of the INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR INTERNAL FREEDOM, its agents, servants, associates and employees, I agree to indemnify the said INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR INTERNAL FREEDOM, its agents, servants, associates and

employees, and save them harmless for any loss, damage or expenses arising from the claim and demand of any person against the INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR INTERNAL FREEDOM, its agents, servants, associates or employees, in connection with the use of LSD, psilocybin and related drugs.

I have read the information concerning these drugs and substances and understand that they are classified for investigational use.

DATE: .....

WITNESS:

.....

And messages from the Cambridge headquarters began to move along the system, telling the news, of odd happenings in Mexico, how 'Internal Freedom' is going to be like Zen this year, and of 'several million thoughtful people who have heard the joyous tidings and who are waiting patiently for their psychedelic moment to come', for whom LSD is becoming a major religious and civil rights controversy. It was a brilliant astonishing concept, even by eccentric New England standards, and deserved all the support it could get; indeed, it seemed for some of its membership to offer the umbrella under which they could enjoy their psychedelic experiences without much spiritual or financial outlay.

But even in the hands of Tim, the eternal juggler, things began crashing about their heads as 'news' about IF-IF circulated in the media and through casual gossip, which may or may not have been true but was certainly extravagant, contradictory, scandalous, libelous, comic and inspirational. An IF-IF-Los Angeles opened for the West Coast. Alpert and Leary went on radio in Boston to explain their mission. Television networks were becoming interested, and 'experimental multifamilial living' using psychedelics began to spring up in different parts of America, along the lines of Tim's model for 'transpersonative, transcendental communities' where family members could 'maintain a level of experience which cuts beyond routine ego and social games'.

Alpert, Tim and his young daughter and son, a married Harvard senior with wife and baby, and several friends had themselves already started one such multi-familial dwelling, in a house they bought in the Newton suburb of Boston. In it there was a specially constructed 'meditation room' accessible from the cellar solely by a rope ladder. The only furnishings were mattresses covered in Indian prints, with drapes billowing down from the ceiling like Tibetan clouds, and huge Afghani cushions on the floor. A tiny oil-lamp gave just enough illumination to see the Buddha statue in the corner. The fragrance of incense completed the effect.

But in the rich middle-class Boston dovecote of Newton, the goings-on at the house had become a source of irritation amongst neighbours, including one lady who had lived for thirty-two years in a house near Dr. Alpert's green ten-bedroom home. 'Some weekends,' she complained to one reporter, 'their house is like a motel. They all wear a beatnik uniform—tight pants and jerseys, no shoes or stockings. One young man in his twenties is letting his blond hair grow down to his shoulders and every time I look at him I want to vomit.'

Finally the families got together for a petition and invoked a Newton statute which allows only one-family dwellings in the neighbourhood. There was a hearing before the planning board in which the colonists were represented by Alpert's father, George Alpert, former president of the New Haven Railroad and a distinguished member of the Massachusetts bar, with his own law firm in Boston. The elder Alpert pointed out that the law does not specify that families must be consanguineous. And with that he won the case; there was no further trouble from neighbours after that.

Nonetheless, all this, and events back at the IF-IF offices, used up a lot of psychic energy in those of us committed to keep the game going. It seemed that the best plan would be to dissolve the corporate legal structure and announce that from henceforth IFIF members could make their own way in the world—just their bodies and a willingness to stay 'on the way', very much as in Hermann Hesse's *The Journey to the East*.

Accordingly, the organisation's board met to formulate the closing-up operation and to send its members the terminating Statement of Purposes.

It was all played as another conscious move in the cosmic 'bead-game'—Remove the old 'set' and *avoid* setting up a new structure, and you have a brand new movie: 'IF-IF will have no members, no budget, no dues, no officers, no meetings. It is now an anonymous system; not secret, not public, but private. The term "IF-IF" no longer stands for International Federation for Internal Freedom. It symbolises the "ecstatic process" as the endpoint of any game or as a point of the no-game experience.'

The basic notion was to aim at some loose association in being identified as 'wayfarers', but without any kind of specific structure anymore, a 'move' that guaranteed both end and start in one.

It was absolutely unique. Once understood, all manner of varieties and variations could be introduced.... Everybody has to find the way for himself, but can send messages and cues from his own voyage, like internal cosmographers charting new internal seas of experience and perhaps pointing out sensory landmarks yet no prescription, no rigid principles, for action. Total Autonomy Always . . . Just a message here and there, or a particular quotation or a description of an experience or exposure of getting stuck in a particular game, all with the general purpose of raising the general tenor of people's lives with the ultimate goal that of complete self-liberation. In the lines immortalised by Bobby Dylan on the 'Lay Lady Lay' track of *Nashville Skyline*—'You can have your cake and eat it too.' Yeah !

The new IF-IF offered entry into a psychedelic paradise of delights with the price of admission only your own head. IF-IF was now free to develop its religious aspirations in the direction of the most ideally minded—the great American youth, by suggesting people who take psychedelics are destined to give that spiritual content to modern life. IF-IF was a church you associated with bringing you up, not down; the new religion was something associated with getting high.

One professor of psychology was very enthusiastic to propose new techniques and complex in-field play:

'Perhaps one could start with or on the IF-IF members as the natural audience and introduce the notion through the news letter, then encourage everybody to send in a return-addressed and stamped envelope. This would reduce the cost. Also send out all material in duplicate, with the instruction to give one copy to an interested friend. That would snowball the development. Also, initially perhaps the comic Zen koans ought to be relatively simple yet not too easy. Something in the nature of different languages, references to significant passages or books, or records, or anything. It is important to get people involved through action, they have to work to solve the koans. Then, gradually . . . one could make it more difficult, and more in "code"—you could circulate original "manifestos" analysing possible game hang-ups and traps in society; and you can build up a body of references one can allude to. Then make it gradually more difficult to obtain information, so that one would have to go through several persons and piece things together.

'To meditate on a type of koan is a great idea. Set up a master file to collate correspondence, but keep everything cosmically anonymous. A lot of disguising and metamorphosis, using code names, etc. The whole thing ought to lead to a spiritual revolution in which everybody works for his own enlightenment, which will come to him in his own way through his own effort, carried by the feeling of participation in a brotherhood, yet without legislation and direct advice or feeding, which necessarily leads to control.

'All this seems like a natural evolution from IF-IF that utilised accepted social games for its dialogue or "duel" with established social structures. But the previous effort is not the way to fight it. In doing so, we submit implicitly to their rules. We have to find new rules which transcend the old ones without direct conflict, but we have to play on our own terms and have the others adjust to finding out what we are up to. Not that we really have to know—as a matter of fact we can't know, because the idea is to keep everything in flux and go beyond the structures as soon as they are built and have been used once. Transcending is being elusive but in a marvelous sense.



(Socratic irony.) If we state fixed goals—other than personal, unique enlightenment—we set ourselves up for being attached, shot at. The secret is that "the way itself" or "being on the way", is its own goal, which means you have to keep changing as you go along. Only the here-and-now counts—the here-and-now which is anyway pregnant with future and past (although it is wrong to *worry* about that). Complete responsive surrender to the challenge of the moment is equal to complete transcendence. Following the call and tuning in on the demands that present themselves; reading the signs of the way through the jungle; being in tune with nature and responding to it, rather than trying to redo everything in one's own image; trying to impose one's own game on to things, people, events: only this leads to liberation, I think. So every event, every manifestation of being, stands on its own terms and wants to be understood as such. One can only serve as the guardian of being, as the custodian of phenomena, to let oneself be swept up and carried away. There need be no questions asked: affirmation and acceptance !

'But people are phobic about "drugs"—a strange phenomenon unto itself—and they rationalise about "artificial" and "short-cuts", etc. If we could use gimmicks and natural disciplines like sensory isolation, movie techniques, and explore other techniques, meditation, what have you, in order to effect some kind of loosening up and ecstatic sweep or upsurge—then it would be easy to convince people about the value of "shortcuts". This effort would allay their fear. Not that we need to worry about convincing people, but to point out to them various possibilities for them to consider. All arguing about pros and cons seems futile. One should report on events, give messages about where we are, what we see, what there is to behold. Persuasion is not needed, but affirmation and signposts, which manifest their own persuasive power on those who are interested.

'I also hope we can write and tape a few programmed Perhaps one could interest a record company in cutting a few discs and distributing them. The communications network could be a powerful influence on tastes. The meditation-room idea is gaining wide recognition here—everybody should build one. There will be tremendous need for meditation guides as well as manuals for trips. All this is very exciting and I hope we can talk about it soon.

'There is a "magic theatre" wherever you look, if you can only relax and forget about yourself as an actor caught in a net struggling to get out. Total involvement and total detachment at the same time, which sounds paradoxical but it seems a desirable and realisable ideal, the 100 per centness, here and now, which makes every moment (even of deadliest routine) seem like a totally new experience merely by letting yourself be addressed each time anew.'

Doctor Strangelove, indeed . . . But it was left to the Grand Master and High Priest Tim, to explain how, in future, messages (verbal and non-verbal) were to be found in the seed that lies at the core of each one of us. He wrapped it up in his own esoteric way—'IF-I F is conservative—it seeks to return to the wisdom of the tribe, to the wisdom of the body, to the wisdom of the nervous system.'

It was all perhaps just a problem of 'unicornity', for Hermann Hesse had written of the pilgrimage:

'Throughout the centuries it had been on the way, towards the light and wonder, and each member, each group, indeed our whole host and its great pilgrimage, was only a wave in the eternal stream of human beings, of the eternal strivings of the human spirit towards the East, towards Home. The knowledge passed through my mind like a ray of light and immediately reminded me of the phrase which I had learned during my novitiate year, which always pleased me immensely without my realising its full significance. It was a phrase by the poet Novalis, "Where are we really going? Always home!" ' (The *Journey to the East*).

And in a practical way, IF-IF—if, IF!—had anticipated Marshall McLuhan's theoretical

basis for what lysergised nervous systems believe about non-verbal, i.e. telepathic, communication:

'Tribal man is tightly sealed in an integral collective awareness that transcends conventional boundaries of time and space. As such, the new society will be one mythic integration, a resonating world akin to the old tribal echo chamber where magic will live again: a world of ESP... Electricity makes possible—and not in the distant future, either—an amplification of human consciousness on a world scale, without any verbalisation at all.' (*Playboy* interview).

Something similar happened to us in New York, where a parallel development was simultaneously taking place at the offices of The Agora Scientific Trust, Inc., on the corner of Eighty-First Street between Madison and Park Avenues. It was only in New York City the game possibilities were different, that's all; it required a different scenario, new players, a fresh response to the organisation possibilities inherent in our new situation. Agora was to be a living metaphor for the kind of idea-sharing an LSD session entails. In our 'Statement of Purposes' a group of us introduced a theoretical model for Agora as a Foundation for Mind Research, and wrote:

'In the seventeenth century Rene Descartes advanced the theory that the body is a machine and is subject to the same investigational techniques that we apply to the natural sciences. In contrast, he considered the human mind to be of immaterial and supernatural design, linked to the body by means of some unknown divine fiat. The ramifications of Cartesian dualism were to provide all areas of Western science with the result that today the body is accorded extensive study and scientific analysis whereas those aspects of human life which are identified with the mind have been greatly neglected by experimental scientists. The tremendous advances of modern biology and medicine are the direct products of the great progress made in the knowledge of the body-machine which have resulted from the mechanistic procedures initiated by Descartes. On the other hand, these same procedures have had a debilitating effect on the study of the phenomenon of consciousness thereby seriously curtailing the studies related to the problem of life. Since biologists tend to extend the machine paradigm to living organisms, they neglect the phenomena not found in machines. Qualitative change is needed in the pattern of our studies if we are to discern an enlarged meaning of nature and of man extending beyond mathematical and experimental analysis of sensory phenomena and human behaviour. We believe, finally, that man has reached a crisis in consciousness within which he has the choice to continue in the path of the growing technicisation of human nature or to enter upon an intensive and comprehensive investigation of mind and its creative process in the pursuit of a greater use of human potential and a deeper understanding of the nature of reality.

'In recent years, there have arisen groups of social scientists and psychologists who have striven to fill the existing vacuum in the study of consciousness. Guided by the successes of the natural scientists they have applied mechanistic attitudes to the study of mind and have sought to understand their subject in terms of behavioural controls and biological-drive modalities. In so doing, they have carried the theory of body-mind dualism to its logical and dangerous conclusion so that today we are faced with a growing tyranny of behaviouristic and mechanistic procedures applied to the exploration of human potentiality.

'We are a group of scientists and researchers who wish to move beyond our own scientific tyranny. We have ceased to be intoxicated with technological proficiency. We cannot endorse a mechanistic interpretation of human behaviour that reduces the mind-brain problem to a materialistic monism. We believe that the current over-emphasis on mechanism has produced a dislocation of vision, one that is resulting in a de-humanisation of knowledge and a de-humanisation of man. We believe that an investigation into the nature and potential of mind, a dynamic consideration of the range and chemistry of consciousness, the utilisation and evaluation of new and old

techniques of intensifying and extending the mind's apprehension of its reality—this is the substance of the research programme that is the Foundation for Mind Research.'

In addition to myself, there were two other directors, John Beresford, M.D. (a long-term friend from the old London days of the fifties, who now lived in New York), and Jean Houston, Ph.D., a young, beautiful woman with two Off-Broadway acting awards and an impressive list of academic involvements and interests (Instructor in Comparative Religion and Philosophy of Religion, Columbia University; Instructor in Philosophy, Hunter College; Associate Professor in Philosophy and Religion, The New School for Social Research; author of *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Re-evaluation of the James Work in the Light of Modern Psychological Theory*, and *Tragedy In an Age of Scepticism*—and was later to co-author with Bob Masters *The Varieties of the Psychedelic Experience*, a work based largely on her experiments at Agora, where she was guide to many intensive LSD sessions). And to help and advise us, we gathered an impressive group of active 'research affiliates', including Victor Lowndes as our 'Tantric' consultant, a position he filled—or fulfilled admirably.

The set-up on Eighty-First Street was tasteful, cosy, well-equipped, and expensive; we rented the floor-through garden apartment in a private building with three rooms, toilet and bath, and a tiny tree-shaded garden at the back.

By chance or by good fortune—or it may even have been by magic—we had discovered in Howard Teague, the Nassau millionaire, that rarest of cultural beings, the patron. He had understood our needs and made the acquisition of the property and furnishings possible, in a very open and generous way. All we had to do in return was keep in touch and maybe visit him in Nassau now and again.

The large centre room fronting the garden was our 'session-room'. No interior decorator ever devised this psychedelic paradise of Swedish six-inch pile rugs and huge, canvas 'mandalas' on ceiling and walls, but once inside you dissolved all normal barriers of consciousness and flowed off into the well of infinity. We had been on a spending spree during the first few hectic days of getting the place ready—a hi-fi sound system with tape-deck and two speakers; a stroboscope; a machine for emitting sub-audible (low-frequency) sound waves; and a 'synchrotron', a device which delivers sound to the right and left ears alternately. This room was also my bedroom.

The front 'office' had a couple of desks, telephones, chairs, electric typewriters, small bar and cabinet, a miniature FBI-type wire recorder, things like that, but was nonetheless decorated in the conventional Manhattan office style, without anyone ever actually using it, except possibly as a place to smoke dope (very illegal in those days!) if there were otherwise straight subjects undergoing a session in the other rooms.

At first, most of the planning and programming was shared by Jean Houston and myself, each with our own little slot to fill or speciality to develop. Jean was curious about what she called 'Phylogenetic recall', the proposition by Jung that in-built in the psychology of modern man there exist archetypes related to the early history of the human race. She was interested in setting up drug-related experimental designs and a foolproof methodology of administration of long-term and short-term psychedelics, most particularly the administration of LSD-25, psilocybin, Dimethyl- and Diethyl-tryptamine, which we had at the office in large supply; and, for myself, the question of my role in Agora is a bit academic since I was both artist and spectator at one with it and myself at the same time, though I remember I used to write memoranda quite a lot and papers, doubtlessly altogether quite meaningless, with titles such as 'Multicentricity and Incongruity; Epistemological Significance of Recent Findings in Research Using LSD-25' and 'Experiments in Thought Acceleration using Psilocybin' and 'The Nature of the Subjective LSD Experience', all of which was, admittedly, pretty didactic stuff compared to IF-IF, but nonetheless rather funny and inspired for all that.

In our psychedelic yellowstone we had found food for both the lion (science) and the unicorn (fantasy/myth/magic), even if in the end we could not persuade them, for all the

correctness of our opinions, to lie down together. What we had tried to do was to blend new concepts and theoretical frameworks—utilising such diverse areas as the geometry and energy dynamics of molecular 'flowing' structure to biochemistry, genetics, vision, memory, and accelerated learning: Yes, ethical and moral practice, too—with all the magical arts, including the 'I Ching', 'Quabhalla', The Tarot pack, and Alchemy, in order to shed new light on what we believed was a crisis in the 'Order' and 'Symbolisation' in Western civilisation. I suppose you could say that our orientation was humanistic. Our 'humane science' aimed towards a simultaneous description of Man from multiple points of view, which itself is nothing more than the multidisciplinary understanding of the way mind and matter work in man.

Sir Julian Huxley, from London, wrote,

'In the psychedelic drugs we have a remarkable opportunity for interesting research. Nobody else, so far as I know, has done any work on different types of psychologically healthy and normal people—people of high or low IQ, of different backgrounds, of different affective dispositions, on verbalisers and visualisers. This would be of extraordinary interest: we might find out not merely how to utilise our mind more energetically and more dynamically, but how to promote creativity by enhancing the creative imagination.'

But as a research area, the psychedelic experience was baffling for most researchers, whose speciality was 'compartmentalized' and who could not visualise the possibility of a 'whole', when perhaps even a new branch of knowledge would have to be developed to embrace new claims, concepts, as happened in mathematics with the discoveries of quantum mechanics and relativity theories, which revolutionized our understanding of the forces at work in the external world but which have yet to be integrated into a unified field theory of modern conceptual knowledge.

In modern America in 1963, the available literature looked more frightful than fruitful. Perhaps understandably, the revolutionary impact of psychedelics was not recognised during the early period of research. Occasional glimpses were found, but the majority of reports suggest that the researchers describing their results were seriously biased by their existing frames of reference. A carry-over of former conceptual systems into the radically new experience provided by these drugs inevitably caused distortions in interpretation of the material covered. Thus, while the work of the British psychiatrist, Dr. Humphrey Osmond, concerning the biochemical nature of schizophrenia was furthered by the introduction of LSD *et al.* during the mid-1950s, at the same time psychedelic theory itself was not advanced. It was in fact restricted into a pre-existing mould by the unconscious association that came to be made between psychedelic drugs and mental illness, which subsequently proved to be as erroneous as it was misleading.

However, even in restricted scientific research, sometimes something could happen to provide a valuable psychedelic programme. In the field of treatment of alcoholism, for one, there were several studies showing a close to fifty per cent (one in two) control rate following 'LSD therapy', a figure which cannot be matched by any other therapeutic approach to this problem, and successful beyond the wildest dreams of Alcoholics Anonymous, to say nothing of conventional psychoanalysis, which has a success rate of curing alcoholics of about one in every hundred, which is nobody. Or on another part of the investigational spectrum, Dr. R. A. Sandison, a Canadian psychiatrist, has reported the emergence of archetypal material during psychedelic sessions, lending weight to the hypotheses of C. G. Jung. Then there were a number of 'naturalistic' studies from different schools of thought, artistic and otherwise, as well as all the Harvard reports when subjects reported states of consciousness, variously described in terms of transcendental experience, i.e. visionary, mind-manifesting, consciousness-expanding. Yes, a lot of research had been done with psychedelics, by comparison with perhaps every other important area of research, the total volume was minute. At the same time, it was also becoming increasingly evident that there were deficiencies in the published work which existed, and, curiously, there had been little if any advance during the

previous two to three years over projects well under way before the 1960s. For example, a review of the position by the psychologists Terrill, Savage and Jackson, published in November, 1962, but dating from a round-table conference in January, 1960, is *not* essentially different from reports published in 1954 and 1956. There were grounds for believing that the main factor which stimulated the widespread interest in psychedelics, which characterized the period of the mid-1950s, was the belief that, through their use, long-standing problems in psychiatry were about to be settled; further, that with the abandoning of this hope a general decline of interest became noticeable in psychiatric circles.

There were even disagreements between some of the developing 'psychedelic theoreticians'. John Beresford, for one, believed that what he called 'the Leary attitude' results from

'a static, unidirectional, relatively fixed set of preconceptualisations of entity caused by and arising from deep psychological disturbances, displaced on to and hence "derealising" a potentially dangerous drug. The error stems fundamentally from passive-receptive tendencies on part of erstwhile principal investigators, causing passive, permissive attitude during the highly suggestible LSD-state, criminally neglecting to acquaint the subject with the essential knowledge, that he can always control whatever his mind is involved with, rendering the subject helpless, and at times, extremely fearful.'

Beresford was a proponent of the counter-theory that the LSD experience is a bi-phasic phenomenon: You must act, as well as feel; decide, as well as submit; allow out, as well as in. He felt quite strongly that LSD provided the

'only curative hope for the "crisis of civilisation" type of malfunctioning', and that 'the cure can be summed up in the one word "integration"; and that integration requires activation of both self and image store. Leary fails miserably because total resistlessness in the end saps strength, leaving character no room in which to grow or form. Partly out of diabolical "Gnosticism", and partly no doubt due also to ignorance, some of Leary's group have flipped out, and sometimes for months at a time, in sessions conducted according to the Leary precepts.'

Beresford believed sincerely in the vast potential of psychedelic drugs. 'With safe and intelligent handling (of LSD),' he wrote, 'the following facts can be substantiated:

- 1) There is *no* possibility of "psychic accidents".
- 2) Standard psychotherapy can be reduced in duration from a matter of years to a matter of months, with long-lasting, if not permanent results.
- 3) The degree of "internal decision-making" possible is very impressive. A new pattern of Gestalt formation, on a level never before thought possible outside of classical conversion reactions, is coming to light and should be explored.
- 4) Knowledge is waiting for the asking concerning alterations of the human mind which were thought non-existent or merely freakish before new psychedelic drug techniques were elaborated. An extensive new area of knowledge of mind is waiting to be opened. It is folly to ignore this.
- 5) It has been beyond all doubt, though perhaps beyond credibility, that thirty-five per cent decibel increases in hearing are obtained on minute doses of LSD; that intellectual procedure beyond the normal capacity are commonplace; that new potentials are brought into existence; the probability of a high incidence of thought transference between two individuals should be brought out into the open. Other equally important researches are waiting.
- 6) The sensation-minded public press, and the providers of scandal, and the prevalent public fear of "losing control" through drugs combined to drive the most valuable chemical discovery of the century almost out of existence.
- 7) No more essential publishing service could be rendered than to place before the

public the unadorned scientific, historical and psychological analysis of the "extraordinary history of LSD".'

Beresford wanted to keep the drug and the research in proper perspective as tools of the scientifically trained as specialist. But any tool can only be as good—or as bad—as the competence of those who use it. Certainly, one must not assign to LSD intellectual problems which defy our present intellectual capacities.

Jean Houston, on the other hand was interested in *advancing the intellectual capabilities* of the modern American—to meet and solve the problems not of today or tomorrow—but *the day after tomorrow*. And by means of a process that you might call travelling in the 'ANTECEDENT FUTURE'—that is inducing the ego to scan the cognitive parts of the cortex in order to develop the ability to bring into the present what is already in the memory and retrieve 'forgotten' information which is then integrated into the normal intellectual processes of ordinary consciousness.

Jean was an intellectually brilliant thinker in her own right, and, if such things still mean anything, it had been discovered in a nationwide survey of the I.Q.s of American Ph.D.s, that Jean's was the highest—a little over the 200 mark', she once told me, though there was never any question in my mind about her obvious intellectual gifts, which were always adequate to meet her function as an Agora director, our third and most junior member.

As with Beresford and myself, she saw modern culture strangled by a crisis of value correlative with a breakdown of its traditional ontological structures. The 'eleventh hour condition' of humanity is that of 'the dark woods'. We are lost in the woods...

'Alone, alone, about a dreadful wood  
Of conscious evil runs a lost mankind,  
Dreading to find its father lest it find  
The good it has dreaded is not good;  
Alone, alone about a dreadful wood...'

—W. H. Auden

The poignant theme of the dark wood emerges in the life of the mind as a symbol of the chaos that must precede the restoration of Order and the revitalisation of the human condition. How then is it possible for modern man to extricate himself from the 'dark woods' of his mind? Jean believed that in psychedelic drugs we had a means to dispel the clouds of despair, and spoke of the promise they held 'of Homecoming'; and of the possibility

'of guiding man past the dark woods of non-being, past deep shadows of aloneness to a world where no longer does man view himself as a creature separated and estranged from all other creatures but rather as a participant in a rich and fertile reality, a reality so interrelated and so full that it could only best be described as a dynamic continuum; the new reality that unfolds in the "psychedelic experience".

'The universe is not a collection of separate bits and pieces, divided in time and space, but is in reality the metaphysical "One", wherein everything is tied up with everything else in a pattern which is absolute for the entire universe. The social hierarchy reflects the psychological hierarchy, the cosmology hierarchy, and the celestial hierarchy; only this reality is not displayed within a single action, but instead, in an abundance of actions in which the most diverse tonalities follow one another in quick succession.

'It is thus with the psychedelic experience. When the threshold of consciousness is crossed we are flooded with the kaleidoscopic vision of cultures, peoples, symbols, remnants of historical and pre-historical memory—the veritable infinity of humanity which seeks to constitute our being. Like Dante in the dark forest we can easily get lost in the labyrinth of strange byways and unknown paths. (This is an all too frequent episode in the unguided psychedelic session.) It should be one of the chief duties of

the session guide to lead the subject through the newly exposed terrain of cultures, histories, eras, and symbols to evoke these contents to lead finally to their interrelationship in the mind of the subject, much the same way as Virgil led Dante through the medieval hierarchical cosmogony so that its many parts became inherent in Dante the man. It should be one of the chief tasks of the guide to assume the role of Virgil in this psychedelically induced Divine Comedy and to indicate and select out of the dynamic continuum in which the subject is immersed some of the historical incident, cultural awareness and racial memory that seems to lie buried in the cortex.'

Jean believed that the reality of the existence of archetypes had been confirmed and demonstrated in the LSD session, which seemed to bring mythological and archetypal structures into conscious awareness. Thus, the role of the session guide is crucial if the subject is not to lose his way in the woods.

'The guide must steer a course of gradual intensification and enhancement of consciousness. The first suggestions must be simple and familiar, geared to focus the subject's attention on the heightening of colour and form perception of well-known objects. Pictures and flowers, music and natural objects—these are the data of initial discovery and consciousness enhancement in the experiencing subject. It is only after several hours of helping the subject build up a familiarity with his extended reality that the guide may begin to prepare the subject for an exploration of transpersonal and phylogenic material.'

Simple, in theory, perhaps, but what in praxis ? Jean ran many LSD sessions at Agora, which she conducted along the lines just adumbrated with some quite astonishing results. She makes some observations on these sessions, as follows:

'In the course of my experimentation I have discovered that a most conducive mode of preparation for phylogenetic investigation is to be had by taking the subject through a "Cook's Tour" of world history. A variety of historical situations and occurrences are suggested in a sketchy manner. The subject, whose eyes are closed, is asked to describe the pictorial display of historic scenery and activity which now he "sees". This he often does with a detail and amplification and frequently an accuracy which far exceeds his normal historical awareness. Whether or not this is owing to the activation of previously learned but long forgotten historical information or to a utilisation of as yet unknown processes of historical evocation cannot be answered at this time. Suffice it to say that the probability rests with the former theory and that the subject's heightened imagination adds to the vividness with which he responds to these suggestions.

'The subject may be invited to walk along the Piraeus with Socrates, to witness a battle in the Thirty Years War, to participate in the bull-leaping at Knossos or to help in building the pyramid of Khufu. He may be asked to gaze over the shoulder of that Cro-Magnon man who painted the great bison in the cave at Altamira. He may join in the violent thrust westward of the troops of Gengis Khan. He may have a front row seat at the battle of Hastings or mingle among the courtiers at the court of Louis XIV. History is his prerogative and it may be explored as fact or fantasy.

'In addition to the historical panorama, the guide may invite the subject to participate in a recapturing of the evolutionary sequences of life. In many cases the subject discards the spectator role which he had assumed for the historical tour and finds himself taken up into a seeming identification with the stages of the evolutionary process. Thus the guide can suggest that the subject *become* that primordial piece of protoplasm floating in an early ocean. (This is described as a very restful state.) Then, either through the promptings of the guide but more frequently through the subject's own initiative there may unfold a reliving of the evolutionary process from gill stage to man. This re-experience of phylogeny is possible because of our germ plasm. Our body contains (however small the bit) a part of that physically real

primeval mud from which we grew, through orders, classes, phyla—to what we are. Thus the physical reality of the evolutionary sequence of life may become available to our consciousness and we may select for it in the psychedelic state. The psychic system has an anatomical pre-history of millions of years as does the body. And just as the body today represents in each of its parts the phylogenetic process, and everywhere still shows traces of its earlier stages—so can the same be said of the psyche. It is for this reason that the activated psyche can be called upon to remember states which to us seem to be unconscious.

'I would suggest then that ages and attitudes of man that are long gone by still survive in the deeper unconscious layers of our mind. The spiritual heritage of archaic man (the ritual and mythology that once visibly guided his conscious life) has vanished to a large extent from the surface of the tangible and conscious realm, yet survives and remains ever present in the subterranean layers of the unconscious. It is part of our being that links us to a remote ancestry and constitutes our involuntary kinship with archaic man and with ancient civilisations and traditions. Depth psychologists have pointed to the universality of psychic processes and the continuity of psyche within the race. We may add to this the theory that the psyche contains all the contents of time—extending backwards, across and through time; history being latently contained in each individual. It is my contention that the psychic depths and the time depths can be tested and explored through the medium of the guide in the psychedelic experiences. The theoretical foundation of such a statement is that the ingestion of psychedelic substances evokes an activation of deeply buried psychic contents and a bringing of them to the surface of consciousness through the selective use of phylogenetic suggestion. As electrodes applied to memory or sensory areas of the brain can stimulate vivid and realistic recall at the moment of contact, so can suggestion activate phylogenetic memory in the subject undergoing the psychedelic experience.

'In the course of human history man has come to the discovery that he is a foreconsciousness that sees only a manifold, incoherent world. Gradually he has been able to order the incoherence of pre-history by perceiving natural laws, by making hypotheses, and by his technological advances beginning to apprehend basic common factors and linkages in what at first appeared as sheer chaos. Through mythological structures he was able to gain some measure of surety in an incoherent world. One step further and he was able to perceive himself as being largely lawmaker and inventor. And now through the agency of the new physics man has attained to a knowledge of the mathematical structure of all matter as being in reality not inert but an instrument of infinite potentialities from which one may draw what forces one will. The pursuit of truth is now in fact akin to the creation of beauty. Yet all this new extension of potentiality bears with it the threat of unparalleled destruction. I maintain that the new physics can be nothing but a deadly danger unless to that knowledge is added that of a new history a parallel and balanced knowledge of ourselves brought back from the subterranean regions of our psyche—our phylogenetic awareness.... Then and only then may we use the new knowledge of outer nature for life and not for death. Our new vision in physics whereby we see ourselves actually devising new natural laws and even creating life must be equated with a deeper insight of ourselves given by a new knowledge of the past. This may be done by restoring man to a dynamic communion with his own sundered psyche, with his old sense of community, and with the whole of life and the universe.'

Of course, Agora was not entirely free from the crackpot element, in whom the doors of perception seemed, if not permanently unhinged then certainly wide open. One correspondent writing from Flamingo Marina, Miami Beach, told of his work with 'a magnetic machine which will hypnotise you and a second machine which goes inside the brain by rays and removes that part of the moral degeneracy involved'. And added 'The patient may be slightly ill for a few days, but his tendencies to sin will be gone.' I simply



replied that we already had one to deal with the libertine tendencies of our staff, and hoped that his fine work in ' "prophylactic phrenology" ' would have wider application, perhaps as an instrument of the church'.

Then there was a complicated correspondence with an American Air Force Major from Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, who wanted Agora to build a 'life-size' Moebius Strip for people to climb in and walk around 'accompanied by the entire spectrum of colour and music'. The object of the envisaged 'Strip' is

'to evoke in the participant any synergic, intuitive or emotive process/product of which he may be capable. This is for the purpose of unlocking his particular iron curtain by working directly on his subconscious through symbols (including language), the energy spectrum (light and colour), form, and even motion and odours if feasible. The super-computer qualities of the mind, including an ageless universal memory core, above-time-space programme actions, and conscious read-outs makes the mind our greatest resource, yet our greatest enigma. It is easy for this mysterious "black box" to be fed with *sensual* inputs that turn out a disordered state of consciousness.'

In both these examples, it is impossible to ignore the high moral tone of the two inventors. On the other hand, which of us would not settle, at whatever cost to our reason, for a febrile and creative, rather than static way of life ? And the fact that the light these two ideas throws is a murky one, doesn't, after all, seem inappropriate to our present situation. Indeed, you could say that they illuminate the stresses placed on the modern psyche in its relationship with modern society.

And yet—I was sensitive to the fact that much of the stuff going on at The Agora Scientific Trust must sound every bit as 'crackpot' as the two examples just noted. The intellectualization of what we had and were doing was a formidable task. We had to find a way to describe certain changed or altered states of consciousness, which lie beyond all rationalization and even beyond all power of words, in a completely new way which would also be intelligible for other people, *whether they'd taken LSD or not*. Thus, no area of possible fruitful research was ever turned down which could be organised on the basis of rational belief, and we decided to structure into an existence an idea or a series of ideas which were derived from peoples' experience with LSD. During the first few months of activity our own 'internal' viewpoints were projected on to the outer world with a content that was found to be full of meaning for other people.

There is an intuitive basis which precedes the intellectual which provides us with something like a magic armour with which during LSD sessions nothing ever goes wrong. Objectively my initial intuitive behaviour during a session when I have given a person LSD can be codified into a set of precepts and illuminations which may collectively serve as starting-off point for others who may want to consider the principles of what it means to be an 'LSD guide'. The following are some facts and ideas from our 1963 Agora days I have assembled—they involve the means by which the 'internal logic' of the LSD situation may be realised in ordinary consciousness, with what assumptions one proceeds, with what goals, and what are the determinants of the goals, and what is the relationship of the knowledge gained through the LSD experience to daily life and ordinary affairs.

I had by this time given LSD to some 300 people and taken it myself about 100 times, and learned by making mistakes, as was inevitable, that no prior frame of reference can do anything but hinder. I 'knew' certain things I had no way of telling before. The intuitive leap had become standardised. For this reason perhaps it was inevitable that I would sooner or later leave Agora, terminating one phase and starting another.

But what sort of people did we give LSD to ? We had hundreds of requests from people all over America who wanted to take it, but the facilities on Eighty-First Street were lacking for such a large-scale operation. Perhaps I could note four sessions which can be accurately dated and leave it to the reader to decide how far they are relevant. (1) An abstract painter, (2) a Captain in the U.S. Navy Office of Naval Research, (3) a Yogi, (4) a hedonist sceptic, a wealthy resident of Manhattan's fashionable Beekman Place and of

Gstaad, Switzerland.

(It should be understood that axiomatic to my belief-fabric is that with LSD each person discovers, or gets, what they want.) The abstract painter, in the course of the most extraordinary visual experiences, in concrete and specific detail, of a mythological residue of a pre-Hindu Indian religious fantasy, discovered the identity of the image which had been eluding him from his paintings.

The Captain achieved extraordinary insight into a problem of mathematical 'transformations' with which he had been unsuccessfully grappling for the past five years. His work was in artificial intelligence via computer design. During the LSD session, he wrote to us afterwards.

'I suddenly realised that whenever I concentrated on a single form and brought it into focus, the situation was analogous to setting up a random set of sensor inputs and connecting these inputs via a fixed but randomly designed network to a series of nodes. I realised that recognition of any given pattern is dependent upon calling a halt in the normal flow of transformations; and, most importantly for my own work, the achievement of really useful automata would appear to depend on mechanism that can effectively monitor the products of a large number of transformations, select from them the important one for study, and the halting of the process long enough to classify the signal from the one transformation for purposes of pattern recognition.'

(Translated into ordinary English, the Captain was trying to invent a 'seeing' machine as effective as the human eye, for use in atomic submarines.)

The Yogi, a man who spent seven years before his arrival in America (where he had become a successful Wall Street stockbroker) studying yoga in a *dhoti* on the banks of the Ganges, jumped from the eighth of the twelve yoga stages—the name eludes me, but that is as far as he had got—to the twelfth, called *Samadhi*, and the very highest form of Bliss, wherein he achieved the state of total identification with all of reality that made him—momentarily—God. The man from Beekman Place for the first time in his life was appraised of a higher, that is more embracing and inclusive, logic than the one he had known hitherto.

In each of these four instances—people widely different in background, education, character, nationality and physique—it was nonetheless possible to abstract a basic, simple set of philosophical understandings, which are valid enough to permit anyone to integrate on a higher-than-usual level of awareness without any danger of paranoia (the common defence against chaos, and one which mitigates against anything of value deriving from the LSD experience) or of anxiety. The talked-about 'hellish experience' is actually completely unnecessary, avoidable and non-contributory, reflecting inadequate mental 'set' or physical 'setting' or technical knowledge on the part of the guide or a mixture of all three.

There was of course no scientific follow-up on these four individuals, but it was possible to deduce certain things when we saw them again a few months later. The painter had entirely reoriented his method of painting and when I last saw him, was working fast and productively (and his paintings do still sell in New York). From the Naval Captain have come some engineering hardware—'resistor networks to accomplish types of transformation to be included in patent disclosures being processed by the Office of Naval Research, Washington under Navy Case 29093'. The Yogi was found to be, I fear, bemoaning the ordinariness of not being God, but was—and still is—making money nicely on the Exchange, while the millionaire believed that he had undergone a complete change in his beliefs about other people. He has not been heard from since.

It was thus with the establishment of the New York centre, plus a form of status stabilisation with Washington (via the U.S. Navy, who intervened on our behalf with the Federal Drug Agency by placing our work in a rosy, even golden, light which resulted in a letting-up of investigative pressure on Agora by the FDA), plus the sketching out of rational (or neo-rational) methods of managing LSD sessions, that this New York phase ended. An astonishing, fascinating period, filled with interest, and with lots of humour at

all times to prevent us from becoming LSD's dupes. But it was only achieved by an enormous amount of work fed by the energy from our emotional fires. At once the impatient reminder comes, and it is true: Agora experiment was achieved at the cost of 'real' emotional contacts with other people, including, at times, ourselves. The emotional content of my existence was reduced to a working absolute minimum (though it was difficult to recognise this process as going on at the time; only afterwards did one realise at what cost the work had been achieved). Perhaps it was all an elaborate form of 'self-therapy' during the tormenting time after the collapse of my marriage in 1960 and plans to reconcile with my wife and the consequent loss of my daughter which became formalised at the moment of my 'rearranging of priorities' *intellectual, rational/artistic creative work = No. 1; love, emotion pleasure, sanity = No. 2*. I had reached the end of my emotional tether; I had been 'on the way' before I took LSD, but the paving had given out, and there were not even stones left to pave new intentions. The country ahead was dark, impenetrable. I was alone at the mercy of my own awful fluidity of self; a time indeed of that 'eleventh hour condition' of which Jean Houston speaks—an impossible hour of the day which is not marked by the sort of clocks you see in shops—so I was never sure of the present or certain enough to determine the content of my emotional future. It is the temptation to withdraw from emotional involvements, perhaps even to curl up inside and stay remote from even the slightest continuity. But of course all things pass—'an afternoon does not last all day, nor a sunset all night'—and by the end of the year I began to realise that the pointer of my 'eleventh hour' was turning and that 'deadened time' was gradually being displaced by a palpable and love-centred present pushing to the future. 'The world, like the big wheel in a deserted funfair, spun slowly toward the final revolution.' (Roger McGough).

All I had really achieved at Agora was the realisation that the sombre doctors, scientists, technicians point only to the rigour of their own particular method. Ah ! but to go without aid in search of truth; perhaps this is the beginning of wisdom—to proceed with the utmost determination towards a forbidding future through a series of 'crisis' instants in which you think you're about to slip over the edge into the awful Abyss of Elsewhere, but catch yourself just in time but by not shrinking from the lightning and thunder, by hurling yourself forward, unafraid of taking risks, in your struggle towards love, consciousness, enlightenment, light and God. And thus the Way was suddenly much smoother; I was over the hump of the year. And it was in this way, out of such emotional despair, that I stumbled out of my dark existential forest into the daylight honesty of Millbrook . .

## 5. The Millbrook Happenings

### 1964

Although the world of Millbrook may seem nonsensical by rational standards to the outside world it was merely another way of saying reason is not enough. We lived out a myth which had not yet been integrated into our personalities. Millbrook was itself the work of art, or a mirror, or simply something going fast like a watch, some time. Like Kafka's castle, it gave out messages into the ether in the form of one high resonant sound which vibrated on the ears of the world as if it were trying to penetrate beyond the barrier separating 'us' from 'them'. We felt satisfied that our goals were every man's, a projection of every man's private ambition. We sought for that unitary state of divine harmony, an existence in which only the sense of wonder remains and all fear gone. Here was a philosophy of TO BECOME in which appear bits of Vedanta and bits of popular pantheism, bits of the Tao and bits of the Ching.

In the Fall of 1964 I arrived at Millbrook. Leary and Alpert, who had proclaimed themselves the International Foundation for Internal Freedom (IFIF), had had to leave Zihuatanejo, Mexico, where they had set up a training centre for people using LSD. They got back to New York and started looking for an alternative base somewhere in the States. The solution to their problem came in the form of a sixty-four-room mansion on a 2000-acre walled estate within two hours motoring distance of the city. They had rented the estate from the young millionaire Billy Hitchcock, at a nominal rent more or less—\$500 a month. The mansion was empty when they and their tiny fellowship arrived, but it was the ideal place

for them to be; it was secluded and spacious and not entirely lacking in antiquated charm. It had been built in the 1890s to the rather bizarre architectural specifications of the German-born gas-lamp magnate, Charles F. Dieterich, who christened his country seat 'Daheim'. The spires and turrets pointing above the trees into a clear open sky, 'Daheim' looked, at first glance, like the creation of some neo-baroque American King Ludwig. In addition to the main building, there was an out-building that consisted of a downstairs bowling alley and a large fireplace room upstairs. It was built in the style of a Bavarian chalet and had a little verandah from which access to the roof was easy. There was also a lodge house at the entrance to the estate, in which Maynard Fergusson and his beautiful wife Flo lived with their children. Millbrook was the headquarters of the Castalia Foundation, so named after the intellectuals' colony in Hermann Hesse's book *Das Glasperlenspiel* (The Glass Bead Game), the last and finest novel by Hermann Hesse, the story of which is set in the Alpine province of Kastalien around the year 2400. In this emotionally chill utopian future, isolated from the mass of population, the elite monastic Castalian Order displays its intellectual mastery through the ritualised game of glass beads, a game encompassing all human knowledge.

'The pattern sings like crystal constellations,  
And when we tell our beads, we serve the whole,  
And cannot be dislodged or misdirected,  
Held in the orbit of the Cosmic Soul.'

Tim was greatly interested in the writings of Hesse, but at this time, it was the glass bead game that held him under its hermetic spell... Joseph Knecht ('servant'), hero of the novel, rises to be a Magister Ludi, the High Priest of the Castalian Order. Gradually he becomes dissatisfied with the exclusive and esoteric nature of those who play the game, for the rules of the game had evolved into an astonishing complexity:

'These rules, the sign language and grammar of the Game, constitute a kind of highly developed secret language drawing upon several sciences and arts, but especially mathematics and music.... The Glass Bead Game is thus a mode of playing with the total contents and values of our culture.... All the insights, noble thoughts, and works of art that the human race has produced in its creative eras, all that subsequent periods of scholarly study have reduced to concepts and converted into intellectual property—on all this immense body of intellectual values the Glass Bead Game player plays like the organist on an organ... (the Game represents) an elite, symbolic form of seeking for perfection, a sublime alchemy, an approach to that Mind which beyond all images and multiplicities is one within itself in other words, to God.'  
[Hermann Hesse, *The Glass Bead Game*, tr. by Richard and Clara Winston, Jonathan Cape, 1970, p. 14ff.]

Knecht left the rarefied world in which he performed with such eminence and resolved to fashion a link between Castalia and the outside world. After making this decision, Knecht fortuitously drowns in an Alpine lake with his protégé, a misfortune that yet points a precedent for action, as the protégé feels henceforth, life will 'demand much greater things of him than he had ever before demanded of himself'.

Tim thought most people missed the real message of Hesse, himself the member of the Hermetic Circle; entranced by the pretty dance of words and theme, they overlook the seed message, for Hesse, in the spirit of Mercurius, is a trickster. Like nature in April, he dresses up his code in fancy plumage. The literary reader picks the fruit, eats quickly, and tosses the core to the ground. But the seed, the electrical message, the code, is in the core. The seed meaning is within, concealed behind the net of symbols. Millbrook's Castalia Foundation was its own 'sublime alchemy', and its own High Priest in Timothy Leary, who saw in Hesse's story of the Castalian Order, both an inspiration and a warning against constricting rigidity.

'Groups which attempt to apply psychedelic experiences to social living will find in the story of Castalia all the features and problems which such attempts inevitably

encounter: the need for a new language or set of symbols to do justice to the incredible complexity and power of the human cerebral machinery; the central importance of maintaining direct contact with the regenerative forces of the life-process through meditation or other methods of altering consciousness; the crucial and essentially insoluble problem of the relation of the mystic community to the world at large. Can the order remain an educative, spiritual force in the society, or must it degenerate through isolation and inattention to a detached, alienated group of idealists ?' [Timothy Leary and Ralph Metzner, *The Psychedelic Renew*, Cambridge, Mass., Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 1963, p. 179.]

For those of us who comprised the household, Millbrook was simply 'a house', in the sense that a house is also a home. We lived as a community of people who had accepted a certain way of living, which had rules and goals, shared by all. We felt that our life-style was a creative solution to the problems of living in the cinematic, labour-saving world. We wanted to explore our spiritual individuality, discover our secret life within, but also to test the validity of our search by means of living and loving and sharing with other people in close community. It was some kind of heightened feeling of self, combined with movement, a natural and instinctive reaction in such a setting, the light, the landscape, an all-pervading tactile quality about the place, the texture and the music of natural surroundings, created a corresponding ambience of colour, affective tonality, and seriousness in our minds. Here we could travel into our own minds, to remote and hitherto inaccessible realms within. We sought the god who inhabits each and every man. We took this lofty house and turned it into a small stepping stone.

Elevated or metaphoric levels of consciousness have been sought by a few men in each generation. The possibility of transcendence has attracted the thoughts of men throughout the ages. The visionary experience has coloured the visions of a few Western thinkers, and has been recorded by many Eastern mystics. It is described in the seventh book of Plato's *Republic* and mapped in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. For the most part, Western psychology has ignored the possibilities of mind-expansion and has become almost entirely externally oriented. During the last hundred years particularly we have gained an incredible expertise in manipulating the objective environment while simultaneously setting up barriers against the exploration of the internal. This imbalance between the outer and inner creates an over-emphasis on action and aggressive behaviour, and a neglect of the fundamental question of what consciousness is.

Everything is internal. Everything happens in the mind. At Millbrook we wanted to develop a methodology to guide us in our journey within. In the West our most ready metaphors are neurological. At Millbrook we wanted to substitute a more apposite imagery. We wished to confront the realities of our nervous system, not in a clinical but in a creative setting. To overcome the superstitious dread of 'tampering with the mind' we set out to learn the language of inner space. Can this internal language be understood? The problem is phenomenological. To go into external space we have to overcome gravitational inertia. By analogy, our ego spins around inside the mind compelling us to be tied to its field of gravity. Transcendental experience is the only escape from the prison imposed by the ego. It is the Saturn rocket that boosts us into a more differentiated and freer space. Yet so far from LSD being the withdrawal of the mind from reality, it has enabled people to appreciate the authentic beauty of what we understand by objective reality.

In the early days at Harvard we didn't know much about this. We knew enough not to impose rules, roles, rituals on the brain of another; enough to plan sessions beforehand in an open way, to remove any fears a person might have that he was going to have an experience put over him. And while we knew not to get people out of their minds, we had to find a way to bring them back. It was like having no equipment to plot re-entry. Millbrook was an attempt to bring people back in a position to sustain their spiritual transformation. And while we drew on the collective wisdom of the great mystical texts we

were not attempting a crude transplant. We desired a coalescence of Eastern insights and Western intelligence. A combination, for example, of the Tantra and Western psychology.

Regularly the permanent members of the household would participate in group sessions, using LSD, and we would take it in turns to plan these. Fourteen people would turn on together. The appointed guide would be responsible for the music, the tapes, the readings, the lights. In one of these run by Dick Alpert, we agreed not to speak for three hours, but to wholly give ourselves in responding to the input. Dick read from Meher Baba, the celebrated Indian mystic who ceased to speak on July 10, 1925 and communicated, through disciples, by means of an alphabet board:

'The sole purpose of creation is that the soul should be able to enjoy the Infinite state of the Over-soul (*Paramatman*) consciously. Although the soul eternally exists in and with the Oversoul in an inviolable unity, *it cannot be conscious of this unity* independently of the creation which is within the limitations of time. It must, therefore, evolve consciousness before it can realise its true status and nature as being identical with the Infinite Over-soul, which is One without a second.' [Meher Baba, 'The Divine Theme for Meditation', cited in C. B. Purdom, *The Perfect Master*, Williams and Norgate, London, 1937, p. 309.]

After three hours we looked in the little hand mirrors we had all been supplied with before the session and watched the various physiognomic metamorphoses. For some people it was like entering the world of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* watching 'in the dim light the hideous face on the canvas' and realising, like Dorian, that 'each of us has Heaven and Hell in him'. Some had a horrific experience of seeing their faces melting or turning bright orange or red or green.

In fact these paranoid symptoms are described in the Tibetan mystical writings where they are hallucinations of devils. In Tibetan *tankapaintings* fearful dragons with huge red eyes belch flame and smoke from their nostrils. These are images of energy that exist in the mind. Under the session conducted by Dick we also saw the snake, which is the coiled DNA, the *Kundalini* serpent which lies at the base of the spine. Once released it fills the mind and heart with light. Unprepared for such images they create fear and terror. As we became more sophisticated with the use of drugs and studied the mystics we could deal with the images. We saw them as *mandalas*, as screens of energy. By suspending analysis we were able to pass through the screens. We noticed that in the centre of all these images is a black hole, the vortex of mystical works. By focusing on this swirling, sucking void we moved through its entrance to the other kingdom. The blind spot in the centre of each *mandala* is recognised by Tibetan monks as a device to reach transcendence. It comes to life and triggers off archetypal images. We learned to move through the *mandala* to Nirvana, the state of absolute bliss.

In our hand mirrors we saw former selves, lives past, and lives we might yet live in the present. And in this session with a dosage of 800 gamma LSD (justified because of the secure supportive system) we saw the multiple facets of our potential. Indeed, 'it might be proposed that what we encounter here is an activation of the phylogenetic inheritance.' [R. E. L. Masters and Jean Houston, *The Varieties of Psychedelic Experience*, Anthony Blond, London, 1967, p. 217] I had experiences of living in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and of living in India 2000 years ago. I also dissolved into a very old man, receded into a young man, spun and shrunk into a baby being born.

After five hours we still had not started to verbalism. We silently prepared for the period of re-entry. Here daily consciousness is slowly intruding and our conceptual mind perceives it with all its inhibitions, its whole pathology of content.

'So far you have been searching for your past personality.  
Unable to find it, you may begin to feel that you will never be the same again,  
That you will come back a changed person.  
Saddened by this you will feel self-pity,  
You will attempt to find your ego, to regain control.'

So thinking you will wander here and there,  
Ceaselessly and distractedly.'  
(*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*)

At peak experience the being is filled with love, joy and ecstasy; under LSD it is impossible to think of killing anything. On reentry we would try to choose who we wanted to be. If we were to return from spiritual heights we wanted to do so changed, still possessed of love and radiance. This was the point of the session, but none of us really managed it. The re-entry periods we wanted to freeze were elusive. Dick's session was followed by a walk in the woods, a silent exercise in looking. And after experiencing the sensuous impact of the grass, and the trees, and the animals we went back to the house and prepared a meal of rice and *tamara*, wine and cheese, and we began to speak to each other.

We also played behavioural games with each other, accumulating evidence to test various hypotheses. As an example, in June 1965 we had all been studying Gurdjieff's *Meetings With Remarkable Men*, Ouspensky's *The Fourth Way*, and Orage's *Psychological Exercises*. Gurdjieff maintained that most people sleepwalk their waking hours away, and saw his own role as that of an alarm clock to wake people from this diurnal somnambulism. To test this we planned a Self-Remembering game. It started at 9.00 a.m. and, in an arbitrary sequence, a bell would ring four times an hour throughout the day. The bell was the signal for us to stop and record what we were doing at the time. Under the heading EXTERNAL we answered the questions *Where are you?* and *What game are you playing?* Under the heading CONSCIOUSNESS we answered the questions *When?* (i.e. Past, Present, Future), *Where?* and *What game?* As the house was full of behaviourists this seemed a normal thing to do.

Tim's wedding to 'the beautiful blonde Swedish model' Nena Von Schlebrugge took place six weeks after I had moved into my upstairs room at Millbrook. It was a radiant morning and we were up early to welcome the guests, most of whom drove up from New York. The marriage service was held in the Episcopal church in the village of Millbrook in the early afternoon and afterwards we returned to the estate where we had arranged a Swedish-style buffet in all the downstairs rooms of Castalia, so guests could wander around the house eating delicacies. I had met most of the guests individually, or in small groups, but this was the first really big gathering of assorted heads. There were some 150 of us, all high on LSD, or pot, or both. It was a brilliant festive occasion with everyone dressed up so brightly that it was like watching an idyllic pageant from Elizabethan England. Most of the girls had dazzling ornaments over Indian saris. They held flowers and seemed to glitter in an extraordinary delicacy. The men wore robes and brightly coloured costumes—harlequin pants, richly textured jackets, sumptuous shirts. To view them on the lawn from the roof of the bowling alley was to peep into a kaleidoscopic garden party of glorious humanity. Castalia had been transformed into a palace and it embraced this ceremony.

It was one of those days when everyone was happy and joyous and loving. Felicities filled the air. Charlie Mingus played his bass, Maynard Fergusson cogitated on his trumpet, and other musicians joined in to produce an elegant weaving series of improvisations. Don Snyder took a wonderfully sympathetic series of photographs. Before Tim and Nena left for New York to catch the plane to New Delhi for their first visit to India there was a receiving line and we all filed past with our presents. Psychedelic presents of course. Some gave hashish, some gave bags of excellent grass. Some gave mushrooms. A snuff box of cocaine. A quantity of LSD. The entire range of mind-expanding substances were proffered to the newly-weds, and all the while people were turning on. When Tim and Nena left we carried on with the celebrations into the dawn, and watched the sun edging over the horizon as the earth heaved over and took us into another day.

Tim was away for more than a month, during which time we sent him messages about what we were doing. Tapes would arrive at New Delhi via American Express and would

be taken up to Tim and Nena, about a mile away in Almora.

'Dear Tim and Nina. We're missing you very much. We've been studying the works of Meher Baba, particularly his book *God Speaks* and we find this fundamental to our journey. We've also been reading Rene Daumal's *Mount Analogue* and our souls are climbing the mountain. Our bodies too: we've built our own mountain from chicken wire and plaster of paris, and we've painted routes and markings on this mountain, a metaphoric statement of where we're at, all climbing the mountain together. We ran seven sessions last week. Some wonderful. Jacky and Susan are very well. Jack is doing well at school, making new friends who he brings round to watch the deer in the park. Susan has been learning to bake. On Tuesday some of us went to Salvador Dali's birthday party at the St. Regis hotel. We were all dressed up, wearing ski masks, each with a different musical instrument. They were about to throw us out when they discovered we were Dali's guests. Gabi gave Dali his pet iguana for a present. Later, when Dali took us to the Stork Club for a meal, he paid and left the iguana on the table as a tip. We are sending you some LSD by next mail, to c/o American Express, New Delhi. Enough for forty trips. Love from Millbrook.'

Gabi, the photographer, had entered Millbrook during the time Tim and Nena were away, a period when we spent a lot of time working on multi-media techniques. The genesis of the multimedia show 'Psychedelic Theatre' came about when, late one evening, Arnie Hendin arrived at Millbrook with his girl, Lois. He was a very active person, tall with a little beard and long hair. He told me he was a photographer. None of us had thought much about using photography in sessions, but Arnie mentioned it as a possibility and asked if he could show me some of his slides. He set up two projectors in the session room, selected some music, and we took some LSD. Then he began to manipulate the projector to inform his photographs with a dynamic quality. Inexorably I was caught up in this dance of the fixed image. It was a weird mosaic of visual rhythm, pulsating vibrating colour. Arnie used our huge mirrors to reflect his slides and bounced them round the room. He took them in and out of focus, blended photographs together, and used this controlled agitation in uncanny counterpoint with the music. These pictures were *real!* I lived in them. A shot of the East Village, New York, would come so alive that I could see the sounds, sense the smells, watch the people move. At times I had to avoid the traffic. Suddenly Arnie switched to a pastoral scene of an old New England barn, and the mood changed abruptly. He had a triangular arrangement of three mirrors which he put in front of the lens to break the image up into multiple facets. Taking the slides out of focus he elevated shapes to forms, and then reduced these to primal blobs of chaotic colour. It anticipated Stanley Kubrik's psychedelic continuum in *2001* when the space pod enters the visionary atmosphere of Jupiter. I felt Arnie had visually duplicated the early stages of the LSD experience. Words had never been equal to the ineffable. These graceful gymnastics of colour which Arnie had produced, by sheer artistry, were the apotheosis of distraction.

He was a magician—not only a technically brilliant photographer, but a being possessed of mysterious creative powers, able to utilise new forms of energy. He had understood that LSD is a non-verbal, visionary experience. An intensity of seeing whether the eyes are opened or closed. Arnie had changed our session room from the inside of a cigar box to the inside of a diamond.

I asked him if there were any other photographers who were his peers in these realms. 'Yes,' Arnie said. 'There is Gabi. He comes from Detroit like me and came to New York to take up a scholarship at the Cooper Union. Gabi spent one day looking round the place and decided it was not for him. He lives in a small basement in the lower East Village.' I had to go into New York the following day to pick up a Tibetan monkey which had been gifted to us. Why not see Gabi then? Arnie told me the address, but asked about the monkey. I explained that the Tibetan monkey had been destined for the Baltimore zoo, but had been rejected by the zoo. The donors were friends of the Fergussons and suggested to them that the Castalia Foundation could have it if we wanted. Of course, we



did. So I was to drive in and pick it up from an animal emporium just off Broadway, near Wall Street.

I drove into New York next morning in the Ford station wagon we had, and went first to see Gabi. He was seated at a table in his basement sticking coloured polo mints on to a discarded car axle. Quite naturally he showed me a champagne glass with broken polo mints stuck around the base. Then a silver spoon hanging from a string in a box with the coloured sweets stuck on to it. After a period spent looking at these and similar creations Gabi introduced me to his animals. He had a pet iguana, a pet crow, a pet mouse. Later on the crow ate the mouse, and the iguana freaked the crow by doing something the crow could not do—blink! It was this same iguana that ended up on a table in the Stork Club as the Salvador Dali tip.

Gabi was a six footer, with long blond hair, and the largest blandest eyes I had ever seen. He looked a bit like Lewis Carroll. I suggested he come out to Millbrook, but told him that first I had to pick up the Tibetan monkey. Would he help me as obviously he had a way with animals? Certainly he would, but if we were going on to Millbrook he wanted to take his animals. Gabi put on his head the northern hemisphere from a metal atlas, and we boxed the mouse, and put the iguana in a cage. Gabi felt that a trip to the financial district might so upset the iguana that it might bite, and we didn't want that. The crow, however, was not nearly so sensitive so we let it fly above the station wagon and follow us to the Wall Street district.

We got into the emporium without incident, and the crow still hung about the station wagon. The monkey, about two-and-a-half feet high with snowy white eyebrows and beard, was put into a huge cage. Gabi said he could speak to animals, so I carried the cage and he carried the monkey. So we walked back to the station wagon, an extraordinary trinity—me in my raccoon coat and tam o'shanter, Gabi with half of the world on his head, and the Tibetan monkey completely at home in Gabi's arms. From the looks on the faces of passers-by it seemed as if a whole section of New York had freaked out! Rush hour took on a new meaning.

As soon as we got back to Millbrook everyone wanted to see some of Gabi's psychedelic magic. He installed the animals and then set up projectors, as Arnie had done. We were soon transfixed by the beauty, dazzling colour, and unique insights performed by Gabi with light and colour. The magicians were taking over. And we liked it.

This development led to other groups coming. Probably the most important was USCO —'US company'—three performers from the artists' colony at Woodstock, N.Y. The group comprised Gerd Stein, poet and former *Playboy* correspondent; Steve Durkee, previously a pop artist; and Michael Callahan, an electronics technician. USCO communicated through a multichannel media mix, a psychedelic orchestra of film, colour slides, kinetic sculpture, strobe lights, and live actors. They had developed a system of linking all projectors to one control manual. With this ability to control all visual effects from one source they used techniques of spinning sound from one speaker to another. This, in conjunction with the images, seemed to us to offer an exciting dramatic possibility, a unique form of theatre. A performance where the audience would be involved intimately in the field of action, participating.

At Millbrook we did not isolate ourselves hermetically from the world outside, but wished to contribute to and reflect something of the spirit of our time. Our Psychedelic Theatre or 'Tranart' (transcendental art) did not arise like a diversion or arrive like a gilded Pavlova. It grew out of alembic of creative minds, from aspects of personal experiences of living. We continually exposed ourselves to novel departures in our conceptual, label-making process and tried to get rid of ideas of what art must necessarily be.

In the case of the Psychedelic Theatre we suspended the general assumption that Theatre is concerned solely with formal, fixed construction like the plays of Ibsen. We wanted to avoid the mistake tacitly committed by both spectator and artist of submitting to a mental trap of knowing what is expected of them. The Psychedelic Theatre arose out of something like the cave-paintings of primitive man interested in constructing a piece of reality from the flux. It was a theatre of controlled spontaneity, offered not as a virtuoso performance by a signature-artist, but as a sensory embrace.

The first public psychedelic event ever performed was at the Village Vanguard jazz club in Greenwich Village on Monday, April 5, 1965. Those taking part were myself, Dick Alpert, Alan Watts, Charlie Mingus, Pete La Roca, Steve Swallow, Charlie Lloyd, Ralph Metzner, Susan Leary, Mario (a dancer), and Bjoern Von Schlegrugge as stage manager in charge of the electronic equipment.

I introduced the event thus:

'Our purpose in being here is to expand our awareness. To assimilate and to see aspects of the psychedelic consciousness. To observe the phenomena of inner space. This is the Magic Theatre. By magic we mean the phenomena of everyday life through which we pass most of our time asleep. Tonight we shall be mixing auditory and visual phenomena. The brain is capable of processing all this data. It will see different images moving in a random/planned fashion. Sound tracks, some of which have been cut up, will be heard. Films and light will perform. All you have to do is focus on one point. And then you will see the rest. Diversity will be unity. But do not try to understand. The brain will do all that later. Here you will have 10,000 visions. So sit back and relax. Extend yourself to an aesthetic distance. You may have the opportunity of leaving your body. Leaving your mind. You are going on a voyage. The price of admission is your mind. For if you attempt to analyse and conceptualise you will cheat yourself of the opportunity to see things in a fresh manner.'

Then I read:

Is it a dream ?  
Shadowy  
Elusive  
Invisible  
All things  
All images  
Move slowly  
Within  
Shimmering nets  
  
Here  
Essence endures  
From here  
All forms emerge  
All forms  
Emerge  
From this second  
Back to the ancient beginning  
(*Tao Sutra 21*)

And we began. The impact of this event is perhaps best appreciated from the review in the *New York Times* of Sunday, April 11, 1965:

'Tamara, her blonde hair falling to her baggy white pyjamas, was passing out Tibetan incense.

' "That's because it's delightful," she explained.

'The patrons who jammed the 123-seat basement jazz club accepted the offerings with an equally earnest mysticism, for they had come to experience the debut of the Psychedelic Theatre—a simulated "session" with the consciousness expanding drug Lysergic Acid Diethylamide, or LSD.

'It was "speakout" night at the Village Vanguard... last week an LSD symposium transcended the merely verbal because, as a grave young man backed by a throbbing bass declaimed, "Our limited lexicography, with its procrustean subject-object limitations cannot communicate this experience."

'Darkness. Up tempo bass. Lights flash through the audience; slides flash on a sheet: Mount Rushmore, biological specimen, Buddha sliding in and out of focus. Drums and a clarinet pick up the rhythm. Tamara, accompanied by Tasha, a thin, haunted-looking young man also in baggy whites; they dance, not quite to a twist, with Siamese arm motions. Later, more dancing, to the Beatles, while a flickering blue light seems to stop the motion into jerks.... A noise like three monotone bears trapped in a sewer, transforming itself into an oriental fluting, bonging and chanting. A movie of a frog embryo in a glass bowl, evolving rotating and flipping to a cool jazz score, while a voice quietly intones universal truths and insights: "... muddy water cannot be fathomed."

'A hundred would-be experiencers were turned away, business at the bar was slow, and the audience was rapt and curiously split. "There's an awful lot of uptowners here," muttered a hostile hipster, glowering at a section of Wednesday matinee women.

'There was a scattering of ageing beards, but the other face was that of youth, sure of its terminology—"Cosmic consciousness", "re-entry", and "set".

'Some matched the religious fervour of the performers, residents of a Millbrook, N.Y. "utopian colony" who soberly passed out jelly beans and balloons during intermission.'

As well as passing out jelly beans (which some of the audience imagined, with delight or apprehension, depending on their attitude, to be treated with LSD) we gave Dick Alpert a spot. He sat on a stool and began telling funny stories about his experiences at Harvard, about his early experiences with his millionaire father, and how this world now seemed several light years away. The audience laughed uproariously at Dick's stories and, after the show, the owner of the Vanguard, Max, came up to Dick.

'You are a natural-born comedian. Would you like to try a week here as a comedian, doing what you did tonight?'

Dick said he would try it.

A couple of weeks later Dick took up the offer. Unfortunately only half a dozen people were watching him and they were boozy and incapable of understanding Dick. Apart from myself, who accompanied Dick to New York for his 'gig', and some friends, no one got the point of his humour. It simply seemed crazy to them that a man could jeopardise an enviable family security and a top academic job to live as Dick was doing then. It was clear to us that for Dick's jokes to be understood everyone had to be high.

Subsequent to the Village Vanguard evening we set up a regular Monday night series of 'Psychedelic Explorations' at the New Theatre, East Fifty-Fourth Street, in collaboration with USCO. There would be lectures, psychedelic improvisations, discussions, performances by the Castalia Foundation and USCO, and finally an informal question-and-answer period. The idea was that the Psychedelic Theatre would illustrate and amplify the themes discussed in the lectures which in turn supplied the theoretical background necessary for an understanding of the new techniques of audio-olfactory-visual alteration of consciousness. Our other main forum was the Coda Galleries in the East Village. This opened in April 1965 and acted as a salon for exhibitions, discussions and demonstrations. It proved immensely successful and on one occasion some 6000 Villagers tried to cram into the sixty-five-person capacity gallery to hear a panel of psychologists and artists discuss the value of chemically-induced transcendence for artists. The Coda's director, Ray Crossen, also sponsored the 'Theatre of the Ridiculous' and many poetry-readings in which I took part. There is no question but that the work we did at that time in New York has been seminal in the development of kinetic and optical art, the new cinema, and freer forms of theatre. It opened up a whole vista of new entertainment possibilities. Arnie Hendin, who had suggested so much of this potential growth on his first evening at Millbrook, was by now developing into a one-man theatrical event; as three Yale psychologists were shortly to find out.

So involved had we been in the Psychedelic Theatre and so closely had we

communicated with Tim in India that it seemed like days not months had passed when he eventually returned with Nena. After the preliminary salutations of welcome, Tim made it very clear that he had mainly learned from India that all fire and metals should be kept underground. 'The great work of the future,' he said, 'will be to return fire and metal back to earth. This will be a work of joy. All works of destruction involve fire and metal. We must overcome them. In future we will separate our garbage into metallic and non-metallic substances. All the metal must be buried.'

I took it upon myself to bury all the empty tin cans by sticking them upside-down into the footpath through the garden. So we would walk on the metal and it would eventually subside into the earth.

Tim began to take up his psychological work with some intensity and announced one morning that three senior Yale psychologists were coming to see around Millbrook that afternoon. Tim wanted this to be a serious exchange of ideas so he asked Arnie Hendin—who wore funny hats, trousers made out of multicoloured curtain-material, and bells—if he would mind discarding his technicolour clothes for the duration of the psychologists' visit.

'Uhuh,' nodded Arnie.

And, true to his word, he went to borrow a lounge suit and a tie and a white shirt and shoes.

The psychologists arrived for lunch and sat, rather stuffily, listening to an affable Tim making jokes and lighthearted conversation. Most of the members of the household present for lunch were stoned, but, in deference to Tim's wishes, we maintained an external propriety. In the middle of lunch Arnie walked in sporting his splendidly conventional outfit and carrying a copy of the *New York Times* under one arm. He nodded and sat down opposite the three psychologists who seemed suitably impressed by his impeccable attire. Arnie opened the *Times* and began to read it. Then he smiled and, as he did so, a trickle of green liquid started spilling from the corners of his mouth, and slowly ran down to his little beard. Next Arnie opened his mouth a little and the green liquid spurted over his chin and on to his white shirt. By now everyone was staring at Arnie, so he opened his mouth in a yawn and the green gushed from his mouth over his newspaper and his shirt, all the while reading the news as if nothing was happening. Arnie had filled his mouth with green vegetable dye and it produced the first one-man happening I had ever seen. The psychologists observed this event fastidiously and seemed, from frowns and raised eyebrows and movements of the mouth, to have agreed that this irreproachably dressed young man was inoffensive—merely afflicted by a slight idiosyncrasy. Tim said nothing at all about it. Neither did we. It seemed the wisest course to smother the scene in silence.

After lunch, Arnie having excused himself with a nod, we suggested to the psychologists that we show them around the house. Indulging the frivolity of a moment, one of the psychologists asked if we had any animals in addition to the four dogs that wandered about the front porch. Tim pointed to the line of Tibetan monastery flags strung along the turrets on the roof of the house and jocularly linked that with the presence of our Tibetan monkey upstairs. Often the monkey roamed about the house, but at meal times it had to be kept in its huge cage because it would perch high up on shelves and throw eggs at people. Obviously that couldn't happen to a distinguished group of Yale psychologists. Tim said he would remember to show them the monkey. We got to the room, entered, and there, sitting in the cage with a banana in one hand and engrossed in the *New York Times*, was Arnie. Tim let the psychologists draw their own conclusions.

Arnie was not only magical and mischievous, though; he could be practical. Once Dick Alpert got a severe cold, dosed himself with aspirins and sleeping pills and retired to the bowling alley where he curled up in a sleeping bag before the big log fire. Arnie asked me about Dick and I confirmed that Dick was miserable and had just gone off to try to sweat out the cold in front of the fire in the bowling alley.

'He doesn't need to do that,' said Arnie.

'Oh ? Why not ?'

'I know of a way to cure colds.'

I had considerable faith in Arnie's powers and agreed to accompany him at midnight to see Dick. When we got into the bowling alley Dick was sleeping like a twisted log in front of the burning fire. Arnie started to prepare the room. He arranged coloured pieces of glass on the floor and built a shrine with a statue of the Buddha quite near to Dick and his sleeping bag. Then Arnie lit about twenty candles. I was watching him, at a loss to see what he was doing other than to create a setting that would normally appeal to Dick. Arnie rushed out again and came back with a primus stove and a huge metal crucible in which he melted lead.

'This,' smiled Arnie, 'is an old recipe for curing colds.'

I nodded.

Every now and then Arnie would throw an apple or a banana into the molten lead and they rapidly disintegrated into sparks which filled the room with a pungent smell. Arnie felt he should now wake Dick but it proved impossible. So Arnie filled a hypodermic with DMT (N,N-dimethyltryptamine—a very fast-acting but temporary psychedelic drug which throws the subject into fantastic realms and renders him incapable of physical action) and injected Dick in the buttocks. Just as he was pulling the needle out, Dick sat bolt upright and we watched him maintain this position rigidly for half an hour while he swirled through neurological space. When he came round, Arnie fed him 800 gamma of LSD from a spoon. After about fifteen minutes Dick turned round and saw the flowing colours of the glass, the Buddha, and the crucible. He looked at Arnie, who was wearing a hat with a tassel of bells, like a troll from Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, and who still periodically threw fruit into the molten lead. As a final measure Arnie put on three separate record-players simultaneously—a Beethoven symphony, a Coltrane record, and a Stockhausen record, all at full volume. Dick seemed to swim in this incredible sonic tidal wave for an hour. Arnie asked Dick if his cold was any better.

Dick smiled: 'It's gone completely.'

The wonder was that he was still there after such drastic treatment, but in fact the cold never returned. We might, therefore, claim that Arnie had found a cure for the common cold, but somehow I cannot see his methods being universally adopted by the medical profession.

Millbrook was not confined to the activities of the permanent household. As its name spread we received many people we admired. As I had been the first person to turn Tim on to LSD, with what he felt were satisfactory results, I was usually called upon to act as guide for the special guests. Several of these had memorable trips. Feliks Topolski got in touch with me, saying he had heard about me from Alex Trocchi in London. Feliks had come to New York to do murals in the St. Regis Hotel and when he arrived at Millbrook we agreed to do a Cook's Tour of the mind. We went to the upstairs room of the bowling alley and I decided to concentrate the visual input on colour, using the projectors to suggest amorphous masses of undifferentiated tonality. I blended images and sounds and let Feliks think on them.

'Remember:

The hallucinations which you may now experience,

The visions and insights,

Will teach you much about yourself and the world.

The veil of routine perception will be torn from your eyes.

Remember the unity of all living things.

Remember the bliss of the Clear Light.'

*(The Tibetan Book of the Dead)*

The session commenced in the late afternoon, and at one point Tim came into the room with Billy Hitchcock. Not wishing to disturb Feliks they sat in a corner, talked briefly, and then left without interfering with Feliks. To Feliks, however, this seemed like a conspiratorial tête-à-tête, and he said to me when they'd gone: 'Wow, they're just like gangsters.'

Our session continued into the early hours of the next morning and as the first light was

being refracted from the clouds I took Feliks out on to the balcony of the bowling alley. Just as we stepped outside there was a flash of lightning.

'The world is charged with the grandeur of God.  
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil...'  
(Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'God's Grandeur')

Feliks was stunned.

'My goodness,' he mumbled in his gentle way, 'look at that.'

'Yes,' I smiled, 'we try to do our best for someone on his first session.'

Dawn came, and later sunlight filled the entire room. Another day, another world, had come. We went back on the balcony, smelling the air, listening to the sounds of the birds, feeling as if we were being reborn with the day. And as our eyes were scanning the horizon we saw a car being driven very fast up the road followed by clouds of dust. The car halted at the bowling alley and out stepped Arnie, a male friend, and a girlfriend. They were naked, and painted all over with colourful symbols. One of Arnie's legs was blue, another green, and looking down I could make out a painting of a torso on his forehead. All he had on was a feather in his hair. He brought a flute out of the car and his friend got a saxophone. Then they started to play and dance at the same time. It lasted a few minutes and then they got back into the car and drove off. They came from nowhere, hadn't been expected, and went away again. Disappeared.

'This was a very vivid hallucination,' Feliks said to me.

I knew it had not been an hallucination, but had to question the whole concept of what was real and what unreal at Millbrook.

Saul Steinberg the cartoonist, who lived in New York, came up for an LSD session. He was very fond of romantic composers and I played records of Ravel, Debussy and Chopin. I laid on some large drawing cards and pencils in case he wanted to draw, but he didn't. Nor did he want any slides. We used a downstairs room in the house, and respecting his wishes for as much solitude as possible, asked the others not to disturb him. After turning him on I left and looked in every hour or so to see how he was doing. He was quiet, smiling at the fire, but asked me to stop the music. He was finding it abrasive and brittle though this was his normal preference for music. Hours later he came out on his own and spent some time with our coatimundi, a South American animal resembling a raccoon. It was a friendly beautiful animal and it curled up in Saul's lap. He put his finger to its mouth and it gently rested its teeth on his finger. I sat beside Saul on the porch for a while, then he went off on his own for a walk through the woods. Driving him back to Poughkeepsie for the train to New York next day, I asked Saul if he had gained anything permanent from his LSD experience.

'I discovered trees,' he said.

Saul's life was usually spent either in his New York home or in his little summer house in East Hampton, a select Long Island bathing resort for the very wealthy. The trees he saw there seemed desiccated.

'At Millbrook I discovered real trees. I have never thought about trees before. That was the principal thing I got from the session.'

And sure enough about two months later, on the *New Yorker* cover, there was a Steinberg drawing which featured—a huge tree.

On Monday, April 19, 1965 Paul Krassner came for a session. Krassner, editor of *The Realist* and later, with Abbie Hoffman, founder of the Yippie party, took LSD with me upstairs in the bowling alley. Krassner later recorded his experience in *The Realist* No. 60, June 1965:

'My LSD experience began with a solid hour of what my "guide" described as cosmic laughter. The more I laughed, the more I tried to think of depressing things—specifically, the atrocities being committed in Vietnam—and the more wild my laughter became . . . I laughed so much I threw up.  
The nearest "outlet" was a window. My hands seemed absolutely unable to open it. My guide opened the window with ease, and I stuck my head out. Was this a guillotine ?

Was he to be my executioner ? Such fantasy occurred to me, but I trusted him and concentrated instead on the beautiful colours of my vomit.

'On the phonograph, the Beatles were singing stuff from *A Hard Day's Night*... I started crying... for false joy, it turned out.

'I had seen the film with my wife—we are separated—and there was, under LSD, an internal hallucination that she had not only helped plan for this record to be placed, but, moreover, in doing so, she had collaborated with someone she considered a schmuck in order to please me.... Filled with gratitude, I decided to call her up (the power of positive paranoia), but I *also* decided that she had planned for me to call her up against my will.... Then I called—collect, since I was in another city.

'The operator asked my name.

'I suddenly answered: "Ringo Starr !"

' "Do you really want me to say that ?"

'I was amazed at my calm, logical response: "Of course, operator. It's a private joke between us, and it's the only way she'll accept a collect call."

'The operator told my wife Ringo Starr was calling collect, and naturally she accepted the call. When I explained why I was calling, she told me I was thanking her for something she didn't even *do*. I had been so sure I'd *communed* with her.... '

Millbrook was music and musicians, too. Charlie Mingus and I were in the kitchen one evening, high on LSD, and unaccountably the tap started making yowling sounds followed by bangs. Charlie got out his bass and played *arco* in counter-point to the sound coming from the watertap. He seemed to know exactly the pattern of the sound. 'I am conducting the sound,' Charlie told me. 'I've taken it over. I've tuned into the vibrations and resonate to them.' Millbrook was Charlie Lloyd playing his flute in the woods. I walked in the woods during the afternoon following the agitated sound of flute music. And there was a very high Charles Lloyd playing to a squirrel who jumped from branch to branch. Charlie performed a flute *obligato* which matched and predicted the movements of the animal. It was as if it was bewitched by the music as it slowed down and relaxed. It was like watching a Disney film.

Millbrook was Pete La Roca, the drummer, taking LSD and wanting to play. We hung a sheet from the ceiling and projected on to it a nine-minute time-lapsed colour film sequence of a frog embryo. From a black dot in the middle of the screen it grew into a tadpole and the eyes and head appeared. Pete drummed in the dark, behind the sheet, providing a rapid pulse that speeded up at the climax of the film. His wife said she had never heard him play so fast. He seemed hypnotised by the record of creation before him. And Steve Swallow, the bass player associated with Mingus, took LSD and watched one of Arnie Hendin's photographs of a flower being taken in and out of focus and mixed with colour filters. I was operating the projector, when I heard Steve stop playing his bass and groaning 'It's so beautiful, it's all so beautiful'. Then there was a double crash as Steve and the bass fell to the floor. He had fainted.

Jazz musicians, psychiatrists, social scientists, people who were crazy enough to think us crazy. Mediums, spiritualists, people who had had spontaneous visions, church ministers. They all came to Millbrook by special appointment.

From my point of view one of the most interesting, fluent and beautiful visitors was Joan Wainscott, an American girl in her mid-twenties who had been studying anthropology at London University. She had acquired a convincing English accent, very sharp and unbreakable. She told me she was a second-degree witch in the British Coven of Witches, and that she had spent a year in Africa living with primitive tribes. Before our LSD session she told me about witches. She reckoned they were priestesses of religion who had simply had a bad press down the centuries. They followed a divine calling. We chatted one another up and then had our session. During this I read her 'Gate of the Soft Mystery', the Sex Cakra:

'Valley of life

Gate of the Soft Mystery

Beginnings in the lowest place  
 Gate of the Soft Mystery  
 Gate of the Dark Woman  
 Gate of the Soft Mystery  
 Seed of all living  
 Gate of the Soft Mystery  
 Constantly enduring  
 Gate of the Soft Mystery  
 Use her gently and  
 Without the touch of pain.'  
 (*Tao Sutra 6*)

It became obvious that we were going to make love. We fed each other grapes, and touched each other on the hands and face. Slowly we merged together in an ecstatic union.

What disasters we did have usually had a comical aspect. As most of the household had taken LSD anything up to 200 times we did not see fit to store it surreptitiously. For example, some liquid LSD was poured into a half-empty port bottle and left on the top floor, usually out-of-bounds to visitors. A Canadian TV crew came to record a Weekend Experimental Workshop for a programme called *Seven Days on Sunday*. The head of the CBC crew, a large man of about six feet, eight inches, began to wander about the house on his own. When he saw the bottle of port, to him a measure of normality in an inscrutable world, he guzzled down a few slugs. Within twenty-five minutes he was on a very high LSD trip, something he was not prepared for. We were sitting in the dining-room when this huge man lumbered in with one shoe off, his tie half undone, his jacket buttons ripped off,

'his doublet all unbrac'd;  
 No hat upon his head; his stockings foul'd  
 Ungarter'd and down-gyved to his ankles;  
 Pale as his shirt; his knees knocking each other;  
 And with a look so piteous in purport  
 As if he had been loosed out of hell  
 To speak of horrors.'  
 (Shakespeare, *Hamlet*)

The weekend visitors found it somewhat extraordinary that this huge TV producer, ostensibly present to record the activities with a detached professional eye, should be stumbling around under the influence of LSD quite incapable of doing anything. We sat with him through the night, comforting him and playing music, until he was afraid no longer. In the morning he was fine. I hope the programme was too.

It is the sudden impact of the unexpected that causes so many bad trips on LSD. Or any other drugs for that matter, as I was to discover when I tried JB118 (the space drug) in an attempt to go as far as possible in mapping the inner Hebrides. The connection with NASA, who were developing JB118 came quite by chance.

One morning the telephone rang. It was a Dr. Steve Groff calling from Miami. As staff hypnotist with NASA he was interested in the use of psychedelic substances in connection with astronaut training. He had just come from the space centre and told me that all the astronauts had taken LSD to prepare themselves for weightlessness and disorientation due to the lack of external coordinates from which to take their bearing. Could he come to Millbrook for a session to see how we were administering LSD? Could he examine for himself our claim to have joyful experiences with LSD, a claim in direct contradiction to the results of sessions taken in clinical psychiatric surroundings?

'Of course,' I said.

Groff arrived and I ran the session for him. During the session he played the Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night* so many times that I, as guide, felt it truly was a hard day's night. Then



after he was saturated with the music we took a walk on the lawn. He told me how he had been in the Olympic sky-diving team and that the LSD experience had certain similarities with a free-fall from an airplane. After describing his sky-diving exploits in some detail he suggested we go to Poughkeepsie airport to rent a plane.

It was easier than I expected. At the airport he presented his Hertz rentaplane card and his flight licence and within minutes a small Cessna had been put at his disposal and we were airborne. As we had no maps we followed the winding road to Millbrook and flew towards the turreted house where apparently miniscule Tibetan flags fluttered.

By this time there were people up on the roof, and some on the verandah and we were 4000 feet high physically, and higher still metaphysically, when Groff began to zoom to within twenty feet of the roof before shooting back into the sky. We did this about a dozen times and enjoyed seeing friends waving up at us. It was a strange visceral experience, like going on a huge roller-coaster on Coney Island. I felt no fear, but enormous elation and was disappointed when after half an hour Groff returned the plane to the airport.

Over lunch Dr. Groff told me of his friend Jim Arender, the former world champion sky-diver. If anyone would appreciate a session it was Jim. And three days later Jim arrived, twenty-six, handsome, dynamic. All-American in appearance but with an un-American interest in astrology. Jim brought along a movie of himself sky-diving and we showed this to him backwards during his session by bouncing the images off a mirror. He was stunned at the correlation between memories of actual flights and the heights reached during his session. And he stayed on at Millbrook to repeat the experience many times.

The links made through Dr. Groff with NASA resulted in us obtaining some JB118, the space drug officially on the secrets list. Dick and I volunteered to try it and remarked that it looked as if we were becoming the guinea pigs for NASA and the CIA. We went to the recording room and when Dick sat down on the couch I took up the lotus position on the floor. We ingested the drug and waited for the slight change in body metabolism one associates with LSD. But wham ! ! ! ! This took effect instantly in the somatic sensory areas. I felt myself moving round the room in leaping acrobatic backward somersaults. I could not prevent this, yet I was not hitting any of the electronic equipment in the room. I was spinning round and round the centre of the room gliding past everything. I had the absolute conviction that I was in a small space capsule about the size of a tennis ball and that I had broken loose from the safety-belts.

I felt alarmed and sensed a paranoic antipathy to whoever had been careless enough to put me in the capsule in such a dangerous way. Suddenly a door in the capsule opened and Whoosh ! ! ! ! I was sucked out and down towards the atmosphere, hurtling down an air corridor, free-falling, able to move any way but upwards. Observers said that all the time I was spreadeagled on the floor, lying on my stomach. But I remember a horrific sensation and suddenly there was a lurch and I stood up. It seemed a parachute had opened just a foot before I hit the earth's surface. Yet it had broken my fall.

I wanted to fly again and I was a crow. I started to caw and flap my arms. *Caw! Caw-caw!* My eyes were tightly closed and I knew what it was to be a bird. I started to hop around the house, pegged my way downstairs and into the dining-room. With my eyes still tightly shut I touched people to see who they were, let my blackfeathered wings brush over human faces. And still I didn't bump into anything. With my eyes closed I steered my way through the house several times. Through doors. Through corridors. Through passages. Eventually I was coaxed back upstairs with a piece of bread as bait and I nested militantly until I finally evolved back into a man and came round. The whole trip had lasted three hours. Dick had sat on the couch for the duration of the trip. He told me his experience was fantastic.

'The first thing I saw was this young chick coming in. She was beautiful with long dark hair. She had a glass in her hand and asked me if I would like some grapejuice. I said yes. She put a glass on the floor and proceeded to fill it with grapejuice until it overflowed and then a red trickle of grapejuice moved across the floor, up the side of the opposite wall, along the ceiling, down the wall near me, on to the floor again, and towards the couch. I had to get up as it threatened to pass over me. I managed to

avoid it and it got back into the glass. It was utterly real.'

I agreed. This JB118 drug made hallucinations palpably real. LSD gave a sense of bliss and oneness with life. JB118 was a solid slab of hallucinatory experience that offered nothing for the traveller to bring back to the real world.

Even more extraordinary, if we indulge our empirical prejudices for a moment, was the experience of Alan Eager and Arnie Hendin on the space drug. They went on an identical trip and were aware of doing so all the time. Like me they were pulled into the vacuum of space and moved freely above the blue curvature of the earth. They saw a little dot approaching them and noticed, when it came closer, that it was a space-craft, with the hammer-and-sickle on the side. As it floated towards them they clung to the side and saw two Russian cosmonauts inside the craft. The men saw Arnie and Alan and seemed frightened. So agitated did they become that Arnie and Alan decided to float away on their own and eventually they returned to earth in Millbrook. Next day, March 19, 1965, it was reported that the Soviet Voskhod 2, containing cosmonauts Pavel Belyayev and Alexei Leonov, had encountered difficulties in reentry. On their first attempt to do so their automatic re-entry system failed and the Voskhod 2 pilots had to make an extra orbit and then bring the spacecraft back to earth themselves. This change in landing site meant a long wait in the winter cold before rescue helicopters located them.... As few of us at Millbrook took much interest in current news it is doubtful if either Arnie or Alan had heard of this flight. They were sure they had not read about it prior to taking the space drug and firmly maintained that the delay in re-entry had been caused by the panic of the cosmonauts in seeing them. We await confirmation from the Soviet Union. Alan and Arnie were to take another sort of trip, this time through the heartlands of America.

'In New York we set up a centre in a large townhouse with a full working theatre in the basement, bought a roomful of diverse musical instruments and opened another chapter in the history of psychedelia. In reaction to the programmed existence at Millbrook, a constant party developed which continued nonstop for months. Many of the Millbrook tribe would visit with us on their days off to play and learn. After a while we got restless. There were too many people around and it got repetitious and dull. We decided to take a trip. It was very cold in New York. I was shooting a lot of DMT... at that time a smoking form had not been discovered. Arnie, Cathy, Simba the Siamese cat and me, plus guitar, soprano sax, pocket coronet, phono, records, psychedelic magic kit and a suitcase of drugs piled in the white Alfa and headed for warmer territory. The *I Ching* might have suggested it, I think.

'The total picture we gave freaked out every cop south of the Mason-Dixon line and we were busted every time Arnie drove. (From the driving seat that is... we all drove at once which can be very tricky sometimes but taking a trip while tripping is another trip—if you know what I mean.) Arnie and I were in costume, he looking like Jesus, but in baseball pants, high sneakers, beads, etc., which is quite the mode now... in '64 it was extraordinary and worth a hundred gamma just to look at it. When he would add extra touches to his gear like those kid space-helmets we wouldn't get half a mile before a cop would see us go by and flip. No harm . . . we were always released very quickly. Arnie, in his best prophet manner, would promise interrogating police chiefs fire and flood unless we were released at once. It always worked.... He's a fine magician. Our clothing was a time trip and it caused short circuits in robot people. Although we ate in all types of restaurants we were never asked to wear ties or jackets. Mainly, I think, because it never occurred to them. It would have been like asking an Eskimo to wear a tie. After a few days' travelling we had it worked out pretty well. Anything we needed from the establishment would be gotten by Cathy as she had a fairly straight appearance.

'We had gotten into warm weather and we travelled and explored all over the countryside on and off the roads... cutting across fields and meadows and treating the Alfa as if it were a Land Rover; stopping at our slightest whim. Antique stores,

underground caverns... far-out little towns with one gas pump the man cranked, little stores that sold penny candy in glass jars and had spittoons that were used. Rural America almost unchanged in fifty years.

'In Charleston we checked into the bridal suite of the Holiday Inn, had supper in our room (preferable to going out) and after bathing proceeded to set up shop. Out came the incense, candles, bottles, India prints, mirrors, toys, comics, phonograph, musical instruments, movie camera, fireworks (we had bought \$100 worth a few hours before), magic kit and the drugs. We had everything but grass... the brown rice of drugs. Arnie tried to score some from our coloured bellhop but his mind had been whitewashed. He brought us a bottle of vodka which we duly set in place unopened. We had about thirty-five caps of beige acid which we hadn't tried yet. We each took a cap. As it came on we saw it was good and took a few more. We were feeling great and proceeded to get married. We had bought funny fake marriage licences which we signed with our other names; Vazy McKoops, Ring, Hank and the Cat Paw Print. We kissed, danced, lit roman candles off the balcony and sparklers inside, which Arnie photographed in the candlelight. We danced and drew arabesques with them, and I drew a showering sparkler out of the bell of the golden soprano. We were flying !

'I took some more caps. Arnie followed. We were travelling very fast now. The speed of sound (all motion is relative) at least. Again we took some more caps and now really started to move. We were at a rate that was so glorious that we decided to add a little JB840 to it.

'I went out into the hall and got some Coke. Then instead of putting a normal dose in a glass, overcome, we poured three-quarters of a bottle of JB118 into the glass and drank. Suddenly, violently, and with a sickening lurch we were moving faster than light. I fell back on the bed and had a vision of a Roman or Etruscan warrior holding a sword to my stomach. It was no vision. I knew it was real. We had poisoned ourselves. Death was here. Real Death. I remembered and gave in surrendering to it. A pain lanced through my right side and my convulsive gasps stopped. BLACKNESS. And then pinpoints of light in the stygian dark. I realised the lights were stars and we were moving through the very edge of our solar system at some unknown speed, but without the feeling of movement. Then to the front of my mind, I sensed an alien intelligence.

'Curious, I probed further, trying to contact it, when it started a mind-probe in an area it thought empty of life it tripped every alarm in my nervous system and body. I could feel my body on earth panicking, ready to explode with terror. I had to withdraw the mind-probe and take care of my terror-struck earth body. My mind came and, carefully, slowly, I began to turn off the alarms and unlock the muscles, sinews and nerves, calm and soothe the glands and get my body back to normal.

'As I was working I realised through visions in another part of my mind, that all of us on earth are remnants of other races and civilisations from various solar systems seeded into earth bodies for a reason not yet revealed. I had been from this solar system originally and had been a galactic ambassador, quite used to dealing with other cultures. Arnie was not of this universe originally, and I vaguely saw his shape as it had been; huge, swift and somehow, feline... fifteen feet tall, five tons and covered with golden fur.

'I opened my eyes, candlelight flickered, and the Holiday Inn took shape. Then a silent screaming came into my mind. It was on the edge of sanity driven there by fear. It was Arnie, Arnie the Great, The Prophet, Magician, Seer, Artist, Arnie was flipping out. I tried to lock my mind on to his, but he was so frightened, his mind was like greasy Jello. I couldn't hold on, so I followed, and when it would stop for an instant, I would hover and try to coax him back. It would have been all right, but Cathy didn't understand. She was trying to help vocally, and every sonic vibration only drove him further out. It was horrible! Arnie was moaning and flickering in and out of reality, sanity pain and dimension. I finally took Cathy to the next room and made her promise to remain silent, but she has a very strong mind and, when she began

thinking of medical help, I couldn't block her thoughts completely. Soon Arnie began to think for help.

'After a time I gave up and called the desk for a doctor. Less than three hours had passed when we started and we were still very high to say the least... plus slightly in shock. The doctor after a game attempt to get Arnie hospitalised, reluctantly gave him a mild sedative. After several stern reminders from me that he was a doctor, not a judge, he finally left, radiating disapproval.

'After a few more eons—earth time, about an hour—Arnie fell asleep. By then it was dawn. We were asked to leave soon after. When Arnie awoke, we moved to the nearest motel (a block away I think) and ate in bed rather quietly and slept till the next day. When we awoke we ate some more, discussed the dumb doctor, and the strange intelligence we had encountered, took stock of our drugs (we had thrown out all of the JB), and packed, giving all the fireworks to a bellhop as Arnie was afraid he would set them off mentally. We were quite down from the experience so we each took two capsules (Cathy wasn't having any), and I drove us out of Charleston through spiral type buildings, heading south, the top down. By the time we were out of the DMT-coloured city-limits and on the open road, we were feeling normally glorious. The car purred, the cat slept, and overhead the most tremendous, white thunderhead in a purple-rose sky formed a glorious paean to earth and the future and we sped into the technicolour southern dusk.'

Probably the most highly-publicised feature of our work at Millbrook was the Weekend Experiential Workshop. These were held on alternate weekends when some fifteen guests would arrive at 7.30 on Friday evening and leave on Sunday afternoon. The idea was to simulate the LSD experience by means of Hindu and Buddhist yogic traditions, Gestalt therapy, Gurdjieff's selfawareness training, and Psychedelic Theatre techniques. We wanted to use all the means at our disposal to provide a nonchemical means of transcendence. Our handout advertising the Experiential Workshops outlined three steps to take to the ideal of maximum awareness and internal freedom:

'The first step is the realisation that there is more: that man's brain, his thirteen-billion-celled computer, is capable of limitless new dimensions of awareness and knowledge. In short that man does not use his head.

'The second step is the realisation that you have to go out of your mind to use your head; that you have to pass beyond everything you have learned in order to become acquainted with the new areas of consciousness. Ignorance of this fact is the veil which shuts man within the narrow confines of his acquired, artifactual concepts of "reality", and prevents him from coming to know his own true nature.

'The third step (once the first two realisations have taken place) is the practical theoretical. How can consciousness be expanded? What is the range of possibilities outside of our current verbal-cognitive models of experience? What light do the new insights perhaps most important, how can the new levels of awareness be maintained ?'

It was to provide the answers implied in the third step that the weekend workshops in consciousness-expansion were instituted by the Castalia Foundation. We noted carefully in our brochure that 'because of the complicated current legal situation in the United States, psychedelic drugs will not be used in these workshops'. This did not prevent many visitors from asking us for drugs but we had to protect ourselves by refusing these paying guests. Several guests, wise to our methods, took LSD before arriving but that was not officially our affair.

The vulgarisation of these weekends commenced at an early stage. In an article in the New York *Sunday News* of August 29, 1965, beneath a banner headline asking ARE THEY OUT OF THEIR MIND ? and suggesting 'You might call these sect members a bunch of weirdos', the article noted:

'On alternative weekends they are joined by ten to fifteen paying guests recruited by direct mail and word of mouth. Most are middle-class professionals—teachers, doctors, psychologists, students. The fee of \$75 a person or \$125 a couple includes plain home-cooking and a mattress on the floor.... There is no happy hour of cocktail chatter. Instead, each guest is escorted silently to a box-like room in the old servant's wing and left there for an hour to meditate.

'The rooms are decorated with madras hangings, wall-sized paintings of Buddha, a collage of words and images collected from a psychedelic fantasy, or religious posters from India. The only furniture besides the mattress may be a lamp, a bookcase or a writing table.'

Such succinct details suggest the guests were paying for a self-imposed ascetic exercise in hardship, but it was nothing of the kind. The money from the workshops paid for oil-heating bills and food, and helped to secure a self-supporting community for the weekends. The Castalia Foundation, after all, was a non-profit corporation. Before the guests arrived on the Friday the guides, of which I was one, would prepare spiritually by taking LSD or pot and would reflect on the imaginative possibilities of Millbrook. The house would be completely silent and the guests were met by a beautiful girl in a sari holding a flower and giving out copies of Max Picard's text on silence:

'Silence has greatness simply because it is...  
It is and that is its greatness, its pure existence...  
There is no beginning to silence and no end...  
Man does not put silence to the test, silence puts man to the test...  
Silence contains everything within itself; it is not waiting for anything, it is always wholly present in itself and completely fills out the space in which it appears...  
Silence is original and self-evident, like the other basic phenomena, like love and liberty and death and life itself...  
And there is more silence than speech in them, more of the invisible than the visible...  
There is also more silence in one person than can be used in a single human life... '

This observation of silence had two reasons. First, as Tim said, 'One of the oldest methods of getting high is silence.' Secondly, it allowed us to impose an essential mood that saved the time of the visitors. For the first workshop we had welcomed the guests with a cocktail party, to break the ice, and the straights immediately plunged into the cocktail party game of which they were the experts. 'Hi, I'm Jack Smith from Denver, who are you?' 'Jack Smith, eh?' And so on. The whole evening had been wasted, and as we were novices in the cocktail party game we were completely flattened. The guests were merely putting an extra spin on their social whirl, while the household was brought down by the experience.

In instituting the idea of silence we wanted to impress on the guests that they were entering a new kingdom. That they were tuning out of their everyday 'normal' world and turning on to ours. Passing through the gates of Millbrook had to be like stepping on to a spacecraft—they had to leave behind them all their usual judgements and normative expectations.

Having welcomed them with silence we gave each guest MESSAGE ONE which requested absolute silence and asked them to look, listen, to non-verbal energy and *experience directly*. With the initial ambiance established we took each guest to a separate small room on the ground floor and gave them three more messages to read in solitude:

## MESSAGE TWO

This period of silence is designed to help you clear your mind from routine thoughts and

to encourage an opening of your awareness in several ways.

Please follow this programme:

1. Fill out the question sheet.
  2. Then spend the next ten to twenty minutes trying to meditate. Focus on the candle and see if you can turn off planning and thinking. Concentrate on the moment-to-moment flow of time.
  3. After ten to twenty minutes turn on the light and read MESSAGE THREE. This is your game contract for the weekend. There are many implications and meanings contained in each paragraph. Read it carefully. Make note of any questions or comments. These will be taken up later.
- After reading MESSAGE THREE, then re-read it.
4. Turn off the light and meditate again for fifteen minutes. Watch how your mind keeps interrupting.
  5. Next, turn on the light and read MESSAGE FOUR.
  6. Wait serenely until you are contacted by a staff member. Be aware of your body, your flow of thoughts, your emotion (you may be bored, or feel rejected, or irritated; you may be excited, hopeful, etc.).

### MESSAGE THREE

#### "HOW TO PLAY THE 'EXPERIENTIAL WORKSHOP GAME' "

##### *What Do We Mean by Game?*

A game is a temporary social arrangement with the following characteristics: goals, roles, rules, strategies, space and time limits, values, rituals.

All of these characteristics of any game are subject to revision. Ecstrogenic games are voluntary and the contract explicit.

You have been invited to participate in the "Experiential Workshop Game" during your stay at Millbrook. This means you are a three-day member of a social system which in some ways may be novel to you. This contract is designed to lessen your "culture shock" and aims to set up a memorable weekend.

##### *Goals*

1. To communicate and exchange ideas about consciousness and its expansion and control. Relevant *theories* about consciousness-expansion will be discussed—neurological, philosophic, religious, psychological, oriental. A wide variety of *methods* will also be reviewed.
2. To employ several of these methods during the weekend, to expand the consciousness of participants and to maintain as high a level of ecstasy as possible.

##### *Roles*

While there are many roles involved in running such an enterprise, in this contract we are solely concerned with the roles involved in the visitor game.

The roles which have been most comfortable to you and of which are of most use to you in your regular life will be of lessened utility here and, indeed, may handicap you. The aim of the workshop is to get out beyond your routine robot consciousness. Thus there is little interest in who you are (were) and much more concern with where and how far you can go. What you can obtain during the weekend depends in part on how much of your routine ego you can leave in your room.

... Why don't you check it in your suitcase ?

*Staff roles.* Around ten people will be present during the weekend whose job is to facilitate the goals of the seminar. Their functions are assigned and scheduled. *Visitor roles.* In general, the actions of visitors are addressed towards the two goals of the seminar: i.e. to learn as much as possible about the theories and methods of consciousness-expansion and to put this knowledge into practice. It is assumed that each visitor is here because of his past experiences and his current interest in consciousness-expansion. It is hoped that you can contribute any special knowledge you have when it seems relevant.

*The Seeking Help Role.* This is not a psychotherapeutic situation and the doctor-patient

game is not played. Personal problems cannot, therefore, become the focus of discussion.

### *Rules*

1. Be aware of and try to minimise the attempt of your robot to capture audiences for its personal dramas.
2. Please obey the laws of the land. In particular do not bring marijuana or any other illegal chemical to the weekend workshop.
3. Visitors are asked to maintain their own room during their stay.

### *Strategies*

The ecstatic-psychedelic experience can be reached by several means:

intellectual

emotional

bodily movement

sexual

somatic-sensory

One of the aims of the workshop is to encourage expansion of consciousness in all five of these functions in some sort of balanced harmony. (Consciousness-expansion in the sexual will be limited to indirect methods.) Since the average person quickly falls into habitual and stereotyped modes of awareness—mental, emotional, physical, sexual, and instinctive—the weekends are designed to produce novel experiences which deliberately "break through" these stereotypes. If you feel yourself reacting with shock or outrage at the challenge to your favourite habits, please remember that this sort of friction probably points to an under-development of some function and is a challenge for growth. For the same reason, do not concentrate only on one of these methods of consciousness-expansion. Take advantage of this opportunity to expand consciousness at all levels.

### *Space Factors*

After a while one of the staff will show you around the house and grounds. During your leisure time you are free to use any areas except for the third floor (which is residential) and the kitchen, except during breakfast period.

### *Time Factors*

The schedule of programmes will be announced. Consult a staff member about additions and revisions to the schedule and about leisure play.

### *Values*

According to the "game model", values are specific to the particular game and hold only for the defined spacetime limits of the game. In the ecstatic game, the "goodness" or greatness of your robot performance is of lessened importance. Each person starts each second with a fresh neurological slate. "Good" is what raises the ecstasy count of all persons present and "bad" is what lowers the ecstasy count.

### *Mythic Context*

While any human behaviour sequence can be seen as unique and original, another illuminating perspective can be obtained by recognising that certain classic human games are continually being re-enacted and that any social situation you find yourself in is a current version of an ancient drama. The question is not How does it turn out? (that is probably pre-ordained by the script and the role) but rather, How well do you play your part ? and, How conscious are you of your role at each moment ? and, How can you change your my/this game?

The Millbrook Workshops are clearly a re-enactment of one of the oldest and most ambitious games—the transcendental game, expansion of consciousness, internal exploration, ecstatic discovery. Our endeavours here are descended from and indebted to those groups of explorers in India, Persia, China, Greece and to their current western counterparts.

### *Rituals*

The creation of consciousness-expansion experiences usually involves rituals—some of

which are directly practical, others of which are designed to evoke mood or readiness to change. The use of certain rituals (candles, mandalas, pictures, incense, etc.) is strictly experimental and does not involve any commitment to sectarian systems on the part of staff members or visitors.'

Finally MESSAGE FOUR reiterated the five most important areas of consciousness accessible to the average person—intellectual, emotional, body movement, somatic-sensory, sexual—and requested the visitor to spend the next ten minutes reviewing his stereotyped methods of awareness in each of these five areas.

Naturally many of the visitors were overwhelmed by reading MESSAGE THREE in solitude, and there was always one guest each weekend who would decide—in silence—that the experience was going to be too much. 'They think they have fallen into the hands of a mad scientist,' Tim used to say, 'and that's when we hear them creeping down the back stairs and screeching out of the driveway.'

Those who stayed on would be divided into groups of five and taken by their appointed guide for a walk in the woods by candlelight. We walked silently in Indian file, then returned to the oak-panelled library for a lecture by Tim or Dick or Ralph or myself. We outlined and discussed our philosophic and methodological ideas and hoped that the guests would sleep on them. For some sleep was rather difficult as they tried to anticipate what was to come.

Saturday morning breakfast was a food game. Everyone had to be up at 7:30 for Ralph Metzner's yoga session, including instructions on sitting in the full lotus and half-lotus positions, standing on the head, and eliminating the doubting fly of the mind. After this Ralph took them to the kitchen for breakfast (where a cupboard door bore the legend 'Take LSD and See') and let them look at it for a while. He had reversed the visual connotations of all the food. The scrambled eggs were green, the porridge was purple or bright orange, the milk was black. As the guests sat down to eat Ralph would say:

'Our ideas dictate to us what we imagine reality to be. And we are very much affected by the imprints we have, particularly those of colour associations. When someone says *sky*, we think of blue, when someone says *meadow* we think of green, when someone says *scrambled eggs* we think of yellow. But this is a mental hangup. It doesn't really make any difference whether scrambled eggs are green as they are today, or whether they are yellow. Why is this ? All of these colour changes were achieved by a non-toxic, odourless, tasteless vegetable dye and as you are eating your green scrambled eggs and drinking your glass of black milk try to reconcile in your mind the different subjective responses that you have, and notice how your brain deals with this input.'

Needless to say Ralph always took the precaution of eating before the visitors and he would sit and observe their attempts to appreciate the anti-food. Hardly any visitor got through this breakfast and, as well as having a mental impact, this method of serving food cut down our weekend budget as we only needed to offer very small portions. The rest of the morning was spent in sweeping up the parquet floors, and in relaxed preparation for the simulated session. In the afternoon I would take groups to the waterfall where, submerged in the gently churning water at the bottom of the fall, I had a bottle of sherry on a string. As my group stood looking at the waterfall I would slowly pull this piece of string, finally revealing the sherry bottle. I also had a box of glasses hidden in the bushes flanking the waterfall.

After spending some time in the woods we went back for the evening meal, taken in the huge dining-room where guests sat crosslegged or knelt on cushions around a circular table raised six inches above the ground. From this room, dominated by the massive fireplace, great windows offered a view of the front lawns. There was an oak-panelled ceiling, a carpetless parquet floor, and sliding doors which led off into the corridor. The meal was simple brown rice or wheat and fruit. Hiziki soaked in water. Baked pumpkin. Aduki beans and onion. And our own bread baked from roast corn flour, water-salt, and sautéed vegetables. The meal itself was a yoga.



Once the guests were seated, the mantra OM was chanted by Tim, followed by a suitable period of silence. Then a little bell would ring and a disembodied message would be relayed into the room: 'With the next mouthful of food contemplate on the wonders of the body: where this food goes, how it is digested, how it is transformed into energy, into you. Think carefully as you chew the next mouthful.'

'Observe your body  
Mandala of the universe  
Observe your body  
Of ancient design  
Holy temple of consciousness  
Central stage of the oldest drama  
  
Observe its structured wonders  
skin  
hair  
tissues  
blood  
bone  
vein  
muscle  
net of nerve  
  
Observe its message.'  
(*Tao Sutra 24*)

After the meal we took the guests to a long darkened room at the back, the session room. It was dominated by mirrors and a huge mandala painted on the ceiling. I always felt conscious of the wood panelling and felt that at times it was like being in a cigar box. All around were mattresses covered with Indian prints. Slide projectors were humming in the dark. Six speakers were linked to a tape recorder so that we could get circular sound. Several pre-programmed movie projectors were ready. I would then say: 'This is not a show, not something outside yourself. We, for our part, will experience some of the same things as you. This is a teaching device. All of us in the household have been engaged in psychedelic work for a number of years and we have developed methods of duplicating the world we see on these trips. We want you to share some of these methods of seeing inner space. We want you to go out of your minds and into your heads.' And I would read:

'Let there be simple, natural things to contact during the session —

hand-woven cloth  
uncarved wood  
flowers—growing things  
ancient music  
burning fire  
a touch of earth  
a splash of water  
fruit, good bread, cheese  
fermenting wine  
candlelight  
temple incense  
a warm hand  
fish swimming  
anything which is over  
five hundred years old  
Of course it is always best to be secluded with nature.'

(*Tao Sutra 19*)

In an instant, from all sides, came an electric bombardment of sound and image including many of the images used in the Psychedelic Theatre: the US flag, Buddha, the frog embryo, amorphous colours. A voice would spin from speaker to speaker saying:

'That which is called ego-death is coming to you  
Remember:  
This is now the hour of death and rebirth;  
Take advantage of this temporary death to obtain the perfect  
State—  
Enlightenment.  
Concentrate on the unity of all living beings.  
Hold on to the Clear Light.  
Use it to attain understanding and love.'  
(*The Tibetan Book of the Dead*)

Then there would be silence and darkness relieved only by candlelight. Watching the perplexity on some faces I thought how strange it was that modern Americans should find something strange in a technique that had been used for thousands of years in one form or other. It was clear that the one who resisted the experience needed a new morality, a set of natural harmonious rules to follow as they spun off into neurological space. They sat, some responsive, some astounded by the assault on their senses. Just as they were becoming accustomed to the candlelight, the stroboscope would start making multiple divisions of light, hitting the retina in a staccato burst and forcing chemical changes. By now the whole concept of environmental reality had been altered. We encouraged the guests to walk around in the flickering movement-stopping light. As a body moved in the stroboscopic light it looked like a series of still photographs being crudely animated. Guests who tried to dance in the light were reduced to chaos because they could not coordinate with their apprehension of their partner's movements. Abruptly the strobe was stopped and we saw only the candles, their light weaving in the warm air of human breath. Slowly the room was bathed in yellow which is the colour of the Root *Cakra* which we reinforced with Tibetan chanting music. After twenty minutes the Water *Cakra* would be played on the tape-recorder:

'Can you lie quietly  
engulfed  
in the fierce slippery union  
of male and female ?  
Warm wet dance of engeneration ?  
Endless ecstasies of couples ?...  
Can you feel the coiled serpent writhing  
While birds sing ?  
Become two cells merging  
Slide together in molecule embrace  
Can you, murmuring  
Lose  
All fusing.'

Twenty minutes after this came the Sex *Cakra* when the room would be suffused in a pale silvery light and we thought of the energies surrounding our sexual feelings. Ravi Shankar music would dissolve into a Caribbean bossanova and we watched slides of men and women in the act of love. So on to the Heart *Cakra*. Colour of red fire. The room bathed in crimson light. Music by Scriabin and Miles Davis and Bach. And the sound of a child's heartbeat. Then the Throat

*Cakra*: blue bubbles of air. Debussy, Indian music, Japanese flute music. Finally the Head *Cakra* with Stockhausen and the sounds of outer space. Slides of the stars and galaxies would edge around the room.

At the end of this timeless session we would bring the visitors back, carefully prepare them for re-entry:

'As you return  
Remember to choose consciously  
Power is the heavy stone wrenched  
from your garden of tenderness  
Virtue is the heavy stone crushing your innocence  
  
What can be learned  
From nature is  
Harmony  
Therefore—  
Shun the social  
Cuddle the elemental  
Avoid angles, lie with the round  
Shun plastic, conspire with seed  
Do no good  
But  
For God's sake  
Feel good  
And  
Nature's order will prevail'  
(*Tao Sutra 3*)

Undoubtedly many of our visitors obtained genuine spiritual edification from these simulated sessions, though it is my experience that they can never be a substitute for the sacrament of LSD. For their money they had been changed in some ways. Even those who did not seek change had access to the Millbrook facilities of seminar rooms, meditation house, forest paths, the lake for swimming, vegetable gardens, art and photographic libraries, music and book libraries with an extensive section on Eastern Philosophy, and our library of tape lectures and experiential films. Some were astounded at what they found. Those willing to drop the sensation-seeking game had an insight into the religious aims of Millbrook. Though many members of the public who might have been otherwise willing to open themselves to the experience were alienated by lurid press reports of which the following, from *The Charlotte Observer*, is typical:

'A quick belt of whisky from the suitcase improves things considerably. OM.  
' "I am Michael Hollingshead," says the man in the doorway, half an hour later. He is tall, thirty-ish, baldish, with cold, cruel grey eyes. "I am your guide for the weekend. Will you follow me?" He has an English accent and a soft voice of sinister authority.  
'Down the hall (OM OM OM) down the stairs. Outside four people gather silently in the back of a battered Land Rover: two women and two men, one of them an egg-bald bespectacled young man from Ottawa.  
' "Right now we're in the period of silence," says Hollingshead. "First we'll go for a little drive, then a little walk, then dinner." He drives along a track through dusk-hushed woods, then out into a field and stops at a pond... Hollingshead produces a bottle of cocktail sherry and paper cups. Dusk deepens. The pond is covered with a film of green growth, which creeps.  
' "Is the period of silence over?" asks the poison ivy woman, emboldened by sherry.  
' "Not for you," says Hollingshead with a little smile.  
'The drive continues through the woods and fields, then back to the house... Timothy Leary enters and sits. He is tall, forty-five, handsome, barefoot, a dentist's son, the father of three: a boy, a girl, and the psychedelic movement... Leary talks... The

reason psychedelic experiences are important and valuable is that people live their lives by their own "chess-boards", playing the lawyer-game, the merchant-game, or some rule-ridden ego-game, rarely if ever expanding their consciousness to the point of true awareness and understanding of man and nature, including themselves.

'He demonstrates: Susan Leary and Hollingshead enact a short skit, she as a wife asking her overworked husband to take a holiday, he as a school principal firing a teacher. Their chessboards do not match; they do not understand each other...

'The appearance of things around Castalia's baroque bastion indicates a certain abandonment of modern survival values... No particular concern is shown for the house... Castalians are above the landed-gentry game. Furniture is not important to them...

'The woodwork and windows need washing, the old parquet floors need polish... the dogs... anoint the porch at will...

'An air of sad decline pervades the house, like a Rolls-Royce being used as a dump truck.'

The fact that the local press had praised our work in maintaining the house and improving the lawns and planting three acres of corn and vegetables is beside the point. Like so many people, that reporter looked without seeing, listened without hearing, calculated without thinking.

I had been a guide for invited guests, a guide for paying visitors, and after taking so many people on an internal journey I felt it might be time to do the same in other countries.

Mark Twain said that 'Guides cannot master the subtleties of the American joke', and though he was not thinking of a psychedelic guide, he had a point. There were too many American jokers doing injustices to Millbrook. One of the greatest guides, Virgil, says to a Dante tormented by frightening phenomena

'But, as for thee, I think and deem it well  
Thou take me for thy guide, and pass with me  
Through an eternal place...'  
(*Inferno*, Canto 1, tr. Dorothy Sayers)

And Dante passes through a hell which in its realistic aspects corresponds closely to the unenlightened daily life. It is the desire of the guide to take his voyager to paradise. As guide to many travellers I have taken them out of their hell and offered them at least a temporary glimpse of paradise.

'The role of the psychedelic guide is new in our society, but the newness of the role should not blind us to the antiquity of its precedents. Priest and shaman, after all, were the first purveyors of its technique. Seer and sibyl mapped the cosmography of its domain. Perhaps the finest of its precedents is to be found in the figure of Virgil in Dante's *Divine Comedy*.... It should be one of the chief tasks of the guide to assume the role of Virgil in this chemically-induced *Divine Comedy* and to help the subject select out of the wealth of phenomena among which he finds himself some of the more promising opportunities for heightened insight, awareness and integral understanding that the guide knows to be available in the psychedelic experience. [R. E. L. Masters and Jean Houston, *op. cit.*, p. 130f.]

I guided Leary and Alpert through their first trips. I guided the authors of the above passage through theirs. I acted as guide to Krassner, Topolski, Steinberg, Mingus, Steve Groff and dozens more. None had bad experiences. None returned with distaste for the spiritual or natural worlds. I endorse the ideal of the guide as Virgil, though could not claim to be an ideal guide. At the most I could claim to be conscious of my subject's creativity and that, in itself, is a step on the road to paradise.

And so I felt it to be time to take to the road again myself. By September 1965 I felt that the Experiential Workshops had been stimulating and often extremely successful. I felt

satisfied with our work in New York developing the Psychedelic Theatre. Americans, the sensitive ones, were responding to the wonderful implications of LSD. Artists and scientists were admitting they could learn from mind expansion. LSD was becoming quite popular with a growing number of people and, in addition to the black market supply emanating from the West Coast, two very devoted student alchemists were synthesising it at Yale.

As a European I felt the time had come for us to share with Europe some of the things we had discovered about the methodology of taking LSD in positive settings. I wanted to rid people of their inhibitions about mystical writings and demonstrate to them that *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the *Tao Te Ching*, and the *I Ching* were really basic manuals with fundamental instructions about taking LSD sessions. We felt we had supplemented this ancient knowledge by the exploitation of modern technological means of transmitting aesthetic phenomena.

From what I had heard in letters and conversations, the psychedelic movement in England was small and badly informed. It appeared that those who took LSD did so as a consciously defiant anti-authoritarian gesture. The spiritual content of the psychedelic experience was being overlooked.

We had a meeting at Millbrook to discuss this question of disseminating the results of our experimental research. It was agreed that I should return to London with the idea of introducing *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* in the translation by Tim, Dick and Ralph; the cyclostyled typescript of the *Tao Be Ching* by Tim and Ralph; and the *Psychedelic Review*, a magazine devoted to the theoretical discussion of psychedelic experience.

Tim came to see me on the day of my departure. He was going to join me in London in January 1966, which gave me three months to set the scene for his arrival. The idea was to rent the Albert Hall, or 'Alpert Hall' as Tim called it, for a psychedelic jamboree. We would get the Beatles or the Stones to perform, invite other artists, and, as the climax of the evening, introduce Tim as the High Priest.

Taking a piece of paper from his pocket Tim said, 'These are your marching orders, your instructions.' What they were I don't know because he decided to scrap them and took a clean sheet of paper and wrote the following on it:

#### 'HOLLINGSHEAD EXPEDITION TO LONDON 1965-66

##### Purpose: SPIRITUAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To introduce to London the interpretation and applications and methods developed by and learned by Michael Hollingshead.

##### A YOGA-OF-EXPRESSION BY MH.

##### *Plan*

No specific programme of expression can be specified in advance. The Yoga may include

1. Tranart\* gallery-bookstore.
2. Weekly psychedelic reviews—lectures—questions and answers—Tranart demonstrations.
3. Radio—TV—newspaper—magazine educational programme.
4. Centre for running LSD session.'

Thus it was I arrived London in the fall of 1965, with several hundred copies of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and thirteen cartons of the *Psychedelic Review* on their way.

\* Tranart was the term we used to describe the art of psychedelic simulation. The name never became widely accepted and to this day there is no adequate label for psychedelic art .

## 6. London on My Mind

### London 1965

It is always interesting to come back to London (why do we love the places we are born in ?)

and see how you react to the people. Here I am no longer 'the traveller', but a resident, which is something you realise the moment you step outside Heathrow—abroad, you can treat the outer world as mere reaction; at home this is impossible. When an Englishman looks at London he is seeing in its masonry the reflection of his race, like a clean slate, with his own face on. He may not like what he sees, but it is a place he may nod to and really feel he knows. Here, then, I am at the mercy of my own particular form of existence; here I am responsible in a definite way, just a citizen like everybody else....

Accordingly, I exchanged the consciousness of Millbrook as rapidly as possible for that of the resident. Through the far-sight of a generous friend, I soon became the lease-holder of a large, comfortable, Pont Street, Belgravia flat, with high ceilings and thick walls. It was here that we opened the WPC ('World Psychedelic Centre') with Desmond O'Brien, a Lloyd's underwriter and Etonian, as President; and, later, Joey Mellen, also ex-Eton and a graduate in law from Oxford, as its Vice-President.

I had brought with me from America a quantity of LSD, about half a gram, or enough for 5000 sessions, part of an experimental batch made available by courtesy of the Czech Government laboratories in Prague, who had taken over as suppliers after Sandoz stopped selling it anymore, that is, after the Leary-Alpert Harvard storm. But as far as Britain was concerned, there were as yet no provisions for LSD *et al.* under the 'Dangerous Drugs' Act. The possession of this drug did not become an offense until the summer of 1966, when Britain fell in line with American legislation in this matter. But it was through this loophole in the 1965 legal situation that the WPC was able to operate in an open way—though we had to watch anything else, particularly hash, for which we could be busted (and eventually were, just five months after we started). But for the time being, and encouraged by the accelerating interest in psychedelics amongst our Chelsea neighbours, we believed that London would indeed become the centre for a world psychedelic movement.

In a city where world-feeling is expressed in the form of an impulse for empirical expansion, our 'message' was simple: If you can't capture the world, then try to conquer the heavens. For the idealism of the *conquistador* would be changed to that of the mystic, the man who conquers nobody except himself. 'The energy which, a little while ago, was able to fill universal space is now condensed into the confines of the individual self; for isn't it said that what is without, is also within? It is just that the eye of insight—the eye that "gets in" where reality "gets out"—has atrophied in man during the past few thousand years; man is blind to the world inside himself and needs the help of *threeeyes* instead of two to gain true wisdom of his own individuality.' We wrote it; we may even have believed it sometimes: and 'acid is to help us see ... '.

Now we could believe with Camus that 'real generosity towards the future lies in giving all to the present'. And since it happens so rarely in a lifetime that one ever gets the chance to give one's *all* to something, or someone, we felt a tremendous sense of involvement now that we had pledged ourselves to spread the psychedelic doctrine. And in one of our earliest manifestos, we wrote

'Man's vision of the future is his recreation—the fulfillment of it is his procreation. The essential ritual is procreation—creation.

'The future is what man thinks up in the present—the logical extension in all cycles of thought of the point of each revelation—the illumination of darkness by the word.

'In the dawn of a new evolutionary phase poets chirp like sparrows....disregarded—like sparrows—the poets keep singing of a vision which is theirs *pour encourager les autres*.... '.

But the nagging question in such matters was how were we going to communicate this message with the rest of the world?

Some of us had begun to wonder if the solution did not lie in the direction first suggested by William Burroughs (in 1961): 'The forward step must be made in silence. We catch ourselves from word forms—this can be accomplished by substituting for words letters, concepts and verbal concepts, other modes of expression: for example, colour.'

And silence is golden for those who live in the land of gold. But from the revolutionists'

point of view, the huge monopolies of power and influence could be seen in 1964 to have become places synonymous with intellectual bankruptcy and spiritual (religious) emptiness. To take one example, the situation with regard to the University Establishment. They could be seen to be institutions of intellectual servitude: 'Students have been systematically dehumanised, deemed incompetent to regulate their own lives, sexually, politically and academically. They are treated like commodities with a price-tag, so much raw material to be processed for the university's clients—business, government and military bureaucracies. Teachers have been relegated to the position of servant-intellectuals, required, for regular promotion, to propagate points of view in harmony with the military and industrial leadership of our society.'

The silence of responsible opinion in the face of such calls to integrity, and ultimately even to sanity itself, all but amounted to a scandal; and certainly a scandal wider in its implications than any freedom movement growing up around psychedelic drug-use, which the mass media promptly called 'abuse', and saw LSD made into a 'dirty' word, like masturbation or VD. We couldn't simply bundle the drugs into a bag and bury it, hoping psychedelics could all somehow be forgotten. This was the problem—what do we do with these psychedelics now that 'we' in the sense of *Everyman* have them?

It was—and is—a bit extraordinary, in Britain of all places, that LSD has been rarely a subject, and even more rarely a successful subject, for our best thinkers (with such notable exceptions as Robert Graves on the subject of 'mushroom' visionary experience, Aldous Huxley, and Gerald Heard, all of whom, perhaps significantly, lived abroad). The reality of the LSD world was too random and fragmentary for any but the most mentally flexible to identify with it, and the unemotional 'cop-out'—*synthesis*—was impossible. British intellectuals were not going to confuse the LSD experience with *their* literary 'stream-of-consciousness' techniques for discovering the truth about processes of deep consciousness, either—you would hardly call Tom Wolfe or James Joyce an 'acid tripper'! What they were unwilling, or unable, to see was that acid literature and acid thoughts are really only those ideas that deal with *high level revelation, mysticism, telepathy, and transcendence of the ego*. And to that extent we were a new human game and had a message of universal interest.

The developing cult of Exploring Inwardness had become a new truth, the stable core around which a new radical movement would evolve. Truth and response are not a private affair, for the truth comes to one man for all men, endowing the recipient of it in his relation to his contemporaries with the authority of the Prophet or of the High Priest. But men do not willingly recognise a new voice that cries from the modern wilderness ... and if they are ever at a loss for a scapegoat, they have their man in him who would seek to remove the distorting web of Maya, the cause of all illusions in the self.

Martin Buber, and a prophet of our time, reminds us that, according to Hasidim, the 'teller of tales', '... the effective exploration of the heart is the beginning of the way in a man's life,' it is the one journey in which 'each man must find his own way for himself'. Or such were my esoteric influences in this period, which fed my vision of a future happier world ...

Thirteen cartons of books arrived at Pont Street via the S.S. *Samarra* from America, a private importation for which H.M. Customs required a Bill of Lading and a completed form C.3. (Now you can't get more accurate than that). This was our 'psychedelic stock' for this 'Operation London'—300 copies of the Leary/Alpert/Metzner *The Psychedelic Experience: A Manual Based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 200 issues of *The Psychedelic Review* ed. by Drs. Weil and Metzner, and 200 copies of *The Psychedelic Reader* ed. by Gunther Weil. It was not only that, at this time, in 1965, there was nothing similar originating in Britain, but such literature was virtually unobtainable here, except possibly through Bernard at Turret Books in Kensington. It also meant that we had a Manual for running 'guided' LSD-sessions through which we could observe the elaboration of 'the Art' as well as various new art-forms. Now we could conduct intensive group-sessions in which the group-mind might participate in an ancient Tibetan ritual, and in the safety of our own homes.

All that now remained was an opportunity to use them, which soon presented itself on the night of the first Full Moon. (Alas, for those who do not actually *feel* the biogenetic vibrations of a Full Moon, it must seem no more than a pathetic, paltry, 'astronomical' phenomenon.) But for the tiny circle of participants who asked to take part in an experience on the *Bardo* plane, it was a night to hear mysteries which quicken the heart, the mysterious power that makes all things new again ...

There were twelve of us on this spacetrip. We saw ourselves as voyagers in search of answers to the secret of magical self-liberation. In Tibet the responsible institution is, or used to be, the College of Magic Ritual. Since it was obviously impossible to duplicate any of this, we structured the decor of the large living-room along the lines of *Sutra 19* from the great esoteric work, the *Tao Te Ching* ... soon the front room was emptied of all furnishings, except the carpet, and we tried to have around simple, natural things to contact during this session—

- hand-woven cloth
- uncarved wood
- flowers—growing things
- ancient music
- burning fire
- a touch of earth
- a splash of water
- fruit, good bread, cheese
- fermenting wine
- candlelight
- temple incense
- a warm hand
- fish swimming
- anything which is over 500 years old.

We also had lots of cushions, some excellent tapes and hi-fi equipment, a slide projector, and several chillums.

We began shortly before midnight, moving into the new temple room with a kind of piety and seriousness you find in acts of faith, when we all took our place in the 'Magic Circle of Liberation'. After a short silence, we passed round the bowl containing grapes impregnated with acid—about 300 micrograms, or what is considered to be a relatively high dosage, likely to last from between eight to twelve hours—the sympathetic discharge would follow in about forty minutes, indicated by enlarged pupil diameter, rise in body temperature, increased heart-rate, variable blood pressure, and sometimes a moderate amount of physical trembling. Yet they are no stronger on the body than the effects of a game of tennis—only thinking makes them so.

During this first period, the period of 'countdown', when the psychic energy first begins to be felt, there is a growing sensation within of thousands of delicate threads moving about the body, subtle lines of force which tremble like Pampas grass, as if some thing had opened inside and they were all streaming out. It is as though one's body is dissolving and floating away, and the 'essence' of Me was being liberated to join the 'essence' of everything else about me. One feels open to a total flow, over and around and within the body, and one becomes more and more conscious of these threads of energy, of their vibrations, like harpstrings giving forth their individual tones. There is something purely physical about it, a sensation, something felt rather than recognised, a matter for intuition, not intellect.

This sensation lasts for perhaps ten to fifteen minutes (though one is hardly conscious of the passing of time). Then the threads seem to collect themselves into a single vibrant strand, circular, coiled like a snake; and then like a snake it slowly begins to unwind, moving almost imperceptibly up the spine, which feels like a hollow tube, gathering in force and intensity and bathing the body in a silvery light and very, very sensual indeed. And one's pale introspective self sits in the boon of these tingling strings, sensitive to the



least vibration beyond time, beyond place, rocking to the motion of all that is.... The dominant impression is that of entering into the very marrow of self ... as if each of the billion atoms which compose the body under normal circumstances is summarised and averaged into crude, discriminate wholesale impressions which are now able to be seen and savoured for itself. The impressions become more intense. The vibrations turn into colours—brilliant blues, purples, and greens with dashes of red and streaks of yellow-orange.

One gradually becomes aware of movement, a rocking type of movement, like on the crest of a wave, yet the body does not move at all ... with an overwhelming acceleration one is turning around and around, swirling, then shuttling back and forth like a piece of potassium on water, hissing, sparkling, full of life and fire.

This experience may be likened to an emotional-reflective visual kaleidoscope ... experiences involving these three components keep dissolving continuously from one pattern to another. Emotionally the patterns ranged from serene contentment and mild euphoria to apprehension which bordered on, but never quite slipped into, alarm. But overwhelmingly they involved (a) astonishment at the absolutely incredible immensity, complexity, intensity and extravagance of being, existence, the cosmos, call it what you will; (b) the most acute sense of the poignancy, fragility, preciousness, and significance of all life and history. The latter is accompanied by a powerful sense of the responsibility of all for all ... intense affection for the others in the room ... importance and rightness of behaving decently and responsibly—of trying to remain 'open' and cool in all areas simultaneously.

As the 'guide' for this first *Bardo* session, my job was to look after the music, the pre-recorded taped messages from the book, and keep the participants in the flow. The set and setting are positive, supportive, anxiety-free so that the reaction will be ecstatic, insightful, and educational, just as when the set and setting are clinical, experimental, non-supportive, and impersonal, the reactions are invariably frightening and confusing.

Thus,  
In the greatest sessions  
One does not know that  
there is a guide  
In the next best sessions  
One praises the guide  
In the good session  
One admires the guide  
It is worse when  
One fears the guide  
The worst is that one pays him  
If the guide lacks trust  
in the people  
Then  
The trust of the people  
will be lacking  
The wise guide guards his words  
The wise guide sits serenely,  
When the greatest session is over  
The people will say—  
"It all happened naturally"  
Or  
"It was so simple, we did it  
all ourselves".'

(Adapted from *Tao Sutra 17*, by Timothy Leary)

Shortly after dropping the acid, I played a tape of Buddhist *Cakramusic*, followed by *Concert Percussion* by the American composer, John Cage. I then read from the

Psychedelic manual:

'O voyager

The time has come for you to seek new levels of reality. Your ego and identity are about to cease. You are about to be set face to face with the Clear Light of the Void. You are about to experience it in its reality. In the ego-free state, wherein all things are like the void and cloudless sky and the naked spotless intellect is like a transparent vacuum; at this moment, know yourself and abide in that state.

O voyager

That which is called ego death is coming to you.

Remember:

This is now the hour of death and rebirth;  
take advantage of this temporary death to obtain the perfect state;  
Enlightenment .

Concentrate on the unity of all living beings.

Hold on to the Clear Light.

Use it to attain understanding and love.

If you cannot maintain the bliss of illumination and if you are slipping back into contact with the external world,

Remember:

The hallucinations which you may now experience, the visions and insights, will teach you much about yourself and the world.

The veil of routine perception will be torn from your eyes.

Remember the unity of all living things.'

About one hour had passed since we ingested the drug, and we were well into the first *Bardo*. We were beginning to confront the awesome illumination of the metaphysical void and new energy transformations. The instructions from the manual acted as necessary guideposts. We were learning how to spin in neurological space. Psychedelic equals mind-opening consciousness. Psychedelic means ecstatic, which is to stand outside our normal patterns. It means going out of your mind, your habitual world of contingencies, space-time coordinates. And the key issue: 'Anything that exists outside exists there inside'. The human brain is analogous to the galactic one—there are some ten to thirteen billion cells in the brain, about the same number as there are stars in the universe where the planet earth is invisible. The problem of consciousness-expansion is the same as the external inertia to get off this planet. The brain is 'hooked' to the external world. Put a person into a sensory-deprivation tank for very long and he is overcome by 'withdrawal' symptoms—anxiety, tension, physical discomfort, and paranoia.

Next I played some music by Ravi Shankar and some bossanova. Interval of fifteen minutes. Then some music by Scriabin and part of a Bach cello suite. Interval. Some Debussy, and Indian flute music by Ghosh. Interval. Bach organ music and some John Cage 'space' music. Interval. The Ali Brothers and Japanese flute music. We also looked at slides projected on to the ceiling Tantric yantras, Vedic Gods, the Buddha, Tibetan mandalas.

I suppose that the room in which we had gathered would appear eccentric to most modern minds—candlelight, flames, incense, drapes flowers, bowls of fruit, but to us it all seemed harmonious, natural and very appropriate for the experiences we were undergoing. The session was not to be thought of as some kind of show, a piece of theatre, an entertainment, but a demonstration and a sharing of novel energy levels and unusual forms of perception. And the decor was to assist the voyager in his experience, a sort of ABC of internal language. It was a device to help one go outside routine modes of experiencing, beyond learned or familiar concepts, so that one was—albeit briefly—no longer aware of oneself as a social figure, but as another entity. We stood outside the familiar self, outside parochial worlds of experience, outside London outside the idea of

being English/American/Danish.

In this sense, the psychedelic experience was not something invented by the Sandoz Chemical Company, but has been known since Vedic times and for which an enormous literature exists. In the West we seek to explain mind in terms of a science called psychology, which is externally oriented towards action and behaviours. But here one faced the fact that in the last analysis *everything* is internal, everything happens in your own mind.

'O friend  
You may experience ego-transcendence,  
Departure from your old self.  
Do not cling in fondness and weakness to your old self.  
Even though you cling to your mind,  
you have lost the power to keep it.  
You gain nothing by struggling in this hallucinatory world.  
Be not attached.  
Be not weak.  
Go forward.  
Relax.  
Merge yourself with them.  
Blissfully accept the wonders of your own making.'

There were still the instructions of the Third Bardo to follow, and crucial to this session, because they gave instructions on how to re-enter one's normal state of consciousness and thus the everyday world ...

'O Voyager,  
Now, if you wish to see the truth,  
Your mind must rest without distraction.  
There is nothing to do, nothing to think.  
Recognise that this is the period of re-entry into the normal world.  
Do not struggle to re-enter the denser atmosphere of routine game existence. Do not attempt to use force or will-power.  
Do not hold on to thoughts.  
Allow the mind to rest in its unmodified state.  
Meditate on the oneness of all energy.  
Do not struggle to explain. Trust your guide.  
Trust your companions. Trust the compassionate Buddha,  
and meditate calmly and without distraction.  
Do not struggle to return. The re-entry will happen by itself.  
Recognise where you are.  
Recognition will lead to liberation.'

Recognition, in this sense, does not lead to liberation, but is liberation. He who really knows (that is to say, vitally, not merely theoretically, with his intelligence) that he is one with the entire universe, is beyond all fetters by virtue of this knowledge. The world no longer binds him to it; because, having once been above or outside ordinary existence, he sees the things of the world differently, from a different point of view, and they no longer possess the same power over him. This 'seeing differently' means at the same time recognition; recognition, therefore, does not only condition, but is, liberation. In his deepest being man is spirit, and the more he recognises this, the more firmly he believes it, the more chains fall away from him. Thus, it could happen that, in accordance with the teachings of the Bardo Thodol, complete recognition overcomes even death. All it needs is a believing soul, which is what is meant when we talk about the power of faith. Ordinary people will only be able to believe when they are convinced simultaneously that

the content of their faith is also objectively real: that Krishna was really an Avatar, that the Bible is really the Word of God, that Christ saved humanity from death in the historical sense. The visionary, on the other hand, knows that faith in the religious sense, and believing-to-be-true in the scientific one, have nothing in common with each other, that religiously it is completely indifferent whether Christ existed or not, and that the true visionary who is spiritualized, employs faith as he would an instrument. Ramakrishna, for instance, was, for a while, a Christian and also a Mussulman; he wanted to know the effect of these ideals; and in the meantime his faith was so strong that Mahomet as well as Jesus appeared to him in the spirit. For the rest, he kept to the worship of Kali, the heavenly mother, as being the cult best suited to his nature, for he knew that no one form was intrinsically adequate to divinity.

In the session we have just considered, it was collaborative, and the planning increased the likelihood that each person would have the sort of experience he wished. Thus his internal freedom, his control over his consciousness is increased. The readings from the *Tibetan Manual* were to bring about 'recognition'; that is to remind the voyager at the moment of ego-loss that he is prepared; to insure that he will flow with the process trustfully. While the Buddhist language may strike the Westerner as 'far-out', keep in mind that this is only one of many manuals and instruction sequences from which the prospective voyager can choose, and that the esoteric quality of the language serves as a mnemonic device, that is, say, a sharp memory tap so that the former instructions and resolutions can be recalled.

If we agree that the human mind was born free but everywhere it is in chains, it will take a miracle to free it: because the chains are magical in the first place. We are in bondage to authority outside ourselves; and to exorcise these chains is the great work of magical self-liberation. And the one way of doing this is to activate the soul. Then the eyes of the spirit would become one with the eyes of the body, and god would be in us, not outside. God in us: *entheos*—enthusiasm: this is the essence of the psychedelic experience. And how, you may wonder, shall we recognise the individual who has thus freed himself from the bonds of appearances, the man who has liberated himself and now walks the earth?

'He who returns in the flow of spirituality  
Brings back a mysterious penetration  
So subtle  
That it is misunderstood.  
Here is his appearance  
Hesitant like one who wades in a stream at winter  
Wary as a man in ambush  
Considerate as a welcome guest  
Fluid like a mountain stream  
Natural as uncarved wood  
Floating high like a gull  
Unfathomable like muddy water  
How can we fathom his muddiness ?  
Water becomes clear through stillness  
How can we become still ?  
By moving with the stream.'

'He stands apart  
Serene  
Curiously observing  
He stands quietly  
Looking forlorn  
Like an infant who has not yet  
learned to know what to smile at  
He is a little sad for what he sees  
While others enjoy their possessions

he lazily drifts, homeless do-nothing, owning nothing  
Or he moves slowly close to the land  
While others are crisp and definite  
he seems indecisive  
He does not seem to be making his way in the world  
He is different  
A wise infant nursing at the breast of all life  
Inside.'

Again and again I must think of these verses from the *Tao Te Ching*, for they remind me of so many of the hippie voyagers I meet on the trail, who live at a different level as the result of extraordinary internal experiences, which alone affect men. With Jesus, they can say: I have, like my father, all life within me.

They are 'different'.

The *milieu* of 'swinging London' in 1965 appeared to me like the best possible caricature of the Edwardian world, that mighty institute for the threefold passion of independence, indulgence, indifference, which gave soul to their esprit and their art of living. Real love was unknown to them, they had no serious interests of any kind- the whole of their existence was spent in grooving, getting high, making the scene. And yet many of them were intelligent and profound and their profundity was not impeded by their life-style; on the contrary, it gave them a means of expression. And for this reason the frivolity of this period occasionally gave an impression of gravity and profundity which struck me as being strange and made one dream.... It was a period when people paid attention to dress, and clothes were no less essential than their bodies—it was a means of expression, and their dressed condition mirrored in their consciousness the outer expression for themselves. 'By changing his clothes he changes the man within.' The mode of dress assisted in expressing certain traits of his being. In this way the process of dressing-up can not only heighten or lessen the individual's power of expression: it can indeed bring about self-realisation.

How did I come to make this observation ? Shortly after I moved into the Pont Street apartment, a couple of my friends took me aside and suggested that I get some new clothes, costumes of the Chelsea of the mid-sixties—Edwardian jackets, embroidered in gold and silver, and silk shirts with huge collars, velvet pants and blue suede shoes, and so forth—and thereby prove that the spirit of this age is the spirit of its wearer. It was a method of clothing oneself with a certain purpose—expressing certain traits of one's being which in the ordinary course of events remain in the background. It is a mode of dress to reveal what the individual is; it alters, as it were, the centre of his being. Such an individual, they argued, is more himself than he is otherwise in his 'real' existence. Accordingly, I let myself be persuaded to exchange my jeans and sweat shirt for a new wardrobe, and Michael Rainey's shop 'Hung On You' sent round a huge pile of fashionable clothes and a bill for £600. There were about five of us staying at the apartment and we divided the clothes between us. I ended up with a pair of flared pin-stripe trousers with an enormous belt and silver buckle, several silk shirts and ties, and a couple of hand-embroidered jackets. Now I was at one with the fashion of my times. The only problem was a psychological one—I was embarrassed to be seen in them and consequently I stayed indoors, ignoring all invitations and gradually reverted back to my jeans and sweat shirt much to the chagrin of those for whom clothes had great significance. There was also the additional factor of the cheque, which bounced, and I felt somehow uncomfortable wearing these expensive clothes as a result.

My associations in this period with a select group of young aristocrats and artists and musicians and writers, responsible for influencing sharply the patterns of the New Vanguard of British culture and intellectual life, was felicitous in the extreme; but it cannot be held solely responsible for making a revolutionary of me.

I was certainly surrounded by a number of high-powered anarchists. My partner,

Desmond O'Brien, was already achieving renown as one of the most far-out LSD exponents in London and had ever been described in one publication as 'Mr. LSD'; and our Vice-President, Joey Mellen, one of the first persons to trepan himself, had already embarked on a career as a priest in a new order which was to make him a distinguished figure of great importance to English evolutionary religion. In addition to my colleagues, associates of the World Psychedelic Centre included such notables as Victor Lowndes, who co-founded the Playboy empire with Hugh Hefner; Julian Ormsby-Gore, the film maker; Alex Trocchi, the philosopher-writer; Michael O'Dwyer, the art gallery owner; Julie Felix, the singer; George Andrews, the poet; Jo Berke, the psychiatrist working with Ronnie Laing; Feliks Topolski, the painter; John Hopkins, the writer; Nick Douglas, the painter; Kim Ella, the singer; Ian Sommerville, the multi-media expert; Roman Polanski, the film maker; Bart Hughes, the high priest of the trepanation movement; Sir Roland Penrose, a director of the Tate Gallery; Hugh Blackwell, the writer; as well as Roger Lewis, Billy Bolitho, Virginia Lyon, Steve Groff, Mark Warman, Olivia de Haulleville, Shelley Cholst, Maggie Russell, Shirley Scott James, Bill Burroughs, Bobby Davidson, Donovan, Paul McCartney, Jim Arender, John Eason, Nicholas Gormanstone, Christopher Gibbs, Suna Portman, and Victoria Ormsby-Gore, all of whom made outstanding contributions to the current London scene.

They exemplified a constellation of attitudes that were of great importance to the cultural-artistic life of London. They represented perhaps the seminal non-conformism of England's mid-sixties intelligentsia—not the evangelical non-conformism of such as the Millbrook sect, but an intellectualized form of psychedelic enlightenment, of which popularised Learyism was largely a culmination—that freed so many of England's educated people from the rigidity of social and class and cultural patterns which had outwardly been solidifying into right-wing Toryism. Their rebellion was typical of this period; the Establishment was the enemy, the representative of the rigid patterns they felt needed to be violently rearranged.

These exotic friends were supplemented through their contacts; and affiliations developed with such places as St. Martin's School of Art, the Institute of Contemporary Arts, where we conducted a 'Workshop in Consciousness Expansion', and such literary figures as Professor Neville Coghill, Norman Mailer, and Philip O'Connor.

And yet ... there was a problem, a self-indulgence of mine which earned me some social suspicion, if not also social ostracism, and which led me—though against all my instincts—well over that line which divides the normal from the abnormal.

I refer, of course, only to my taking of methedrine.

It was not illegal to take methedrine, provided that one has a prescription, signed by a registered medical practitioner; and one could legally receive regular supplies of this (or any other 'hard' narcotic) drug, provided that the physician prescribes for an 'addiction'. In 1965, not only was my purchase of methedrine legal: friends bought their heroin and their cocaine with no more trouble than that with which they purchased their cough syrup. I took my methedrine in the 'pure' form, as a liquid, being the form in which the drug is most easily assimilable. And in doses that medical descriptions of the typical methedrine-addiction syndrome indicate to have been heavy ones, about seven injections a day. But that I had a serious addiction, a description of my nervous activity makes clear: the restlessness, the ability to work for days without adequate sleep, and even without rest at all; the abrupt changes of mood; and the equally abrupt collapse into somnolence not far (if at all) removed from a torpor bordering on coma these, to those who have studied the effects of methedrine addiction, are the unmistakable evidence of heavy and prolonged indulgence in a powerful narcotic.

I also smoked pot and hashish constantly, and tried every chemical I was handed. I also took acid about three times a week and in dosages in excess of 500 micrograms. I never slept, and after about two months I had turned myself into a sort of zombie. Every now and then I injected myself with dimethyl-tryptamine—a fast-acting psychedelic of short duration—to jack myself back into life again.

Naturally, this 'hard' drug-taking led to a complete disorientation of my life, which was now chaotic in the extreme, and I spiralled further and further down until I was caught in a

mental prison of anxieties, paranoia, frictions and most despairs of consequence. It was all very, very frightening, and I began to think that I would remain forever hung up on an endless chain of manic-depressive emotions. It was ironic, really, that after all those lessons in meditation, all those disciplines and yogic exercises those trips under LSD, those austerities and years of metaphysical reflection, the mystic dreams, quiet days, the idea that there was no need to *achieve* anymore or to go about and do things and make things happen, I was now at the mercy of a non-miraculous addiction.

In vain I tried to kick the habit, but it was impossible, the monkey was on my back and I could not remove it. I began to believe that it was all somehow a cosmic plot in which I was the victim. I had nightmares which nearly scared me to death. I reached a point where communication with other people was impossible. I saw the whole world conspiring against me. I was literally out of my mind and living in some kind of hell of my own making. And, worst of all, there was no one I could turn to for help, for there was no one I trusted; such were the effects of this poison I injected into myself.

And the situation at Pont Street became more and more unreal so much so that all my friends stopped coming round and everyone thought I was crazy, which I was, if my behaviour was anything to go by. That is how I appeared to them, what I was for them—a stupid, insensitive, unthinking person. What this drug had done was to reveal the hidden monstrousness and infernal depths within my psyche. Certainly, I made conscious efforts to exorcise the sources of my confusion, but in vain. How would I ever rid myself of this methedrine hell, this habit which was killing me? I had plunged into the abyss, gone beyond my limitations, beyond even the confines of my reason which had served me so well. This was the land of madness, of death. How undignified, despicable, meaningless! Yet, like all addicts, I clung to my drug. I had grown accustomed to it, I had even formed a superstitious affection for it. I didn't want to stop my habit. One fix meant four more hours of life another fix, four more hours of life. I couldn't just let myself go, for this would have meant death, and I still clung stubbornly to life. But there was a sense in which I was already dead. The taking of methedrine implies excess of life, intemperance, and surfeit; it is also a way of killing yourself. This realisation accounted for the uncontrollable terror, the panic, which gripped my soul at nightfall, when I was alone with the alone and lost in a maze of contradictory emotions, when I knew that my addiction was at once tragic, dangerous, terrifying and immoral.

And I was not the only one who thought so. George Andrews, obviously disturbed by what was happening, wrote me a letter:

'Dear Michael, I have been hearing some strange stories about you from a lot of different people. In Tangier I learned to draw a very sharp line of distinction between the psychedelic guide, who is rare, and the psychedelic hustler, who is a dime a dozen. For someone with as much experience as you have had, to be using it the way you seem to be, you have in your hands the Void in crystal form, the lightning of the gods, the jade wine of the immortals. All the flip-outs and bad trips one is responsible for are added to one's daily load of *karma*. Why make the load even heavier? Why not lighten it instead?'

But the advice could not be heeded. Like a poison gas, the methedrine had become all-invading, and I knew that I was close to death.

I ought to have known better. What a situation to be in! The euphoria of the drug had become my refuge from the real world. It was a barrier between myself and other people, a wailing wall, a wall of separation. And I wondered what would become of me. Was I a helpless puppet in the hands of some unimaginably cruel demon, tugged and pulled on invisible strings, but off from myself, since my innermost being was no longer in control. What was the use of knowing mystical truths? What help were they now? That I had to stop injecting toxins into my body was obvious enough. But how must I do this? Never have I, the wanderer, felt such pains of anguish in my soul. It seemed to me at times as though the demon methedrine was at hand to strip my mind of all reason.

I was in the depths of despair, and anguish. Where I should be laughing and playing, I felt

horror and disgust. And I did not understand how I had got myself into such a situation, how my addiction was possible. The demon laughs: what is there to understand ? It is something to like and enjoy. It is a matter of course ! Is this the secret?—I felt as though in some mysterious manner, in some indescribable sense, I was living in a plastic world where there was neither light nor fertility nor, on the other hand, any wish to understand my former research after truth. The spiritual light was extinguished in the same sudden and mysterious way as it flashed up. The old dregs filled me up, took me to task, threatened to weigh me down; I felt my humanity as something alien, burdensome; worse still than that of the helpless animal in a trap, because I knew how to question the validity of that which was beyond my power to control.

It was an impossible situation. It would never have occurred to me a few years ago, when I first started to extend my sensory appreciations and nervous system, that one day I should find myself sitting in the living-room of a Belgravia apartment trying to inject myself with 'speed'; or that if by some freaky accident such a bizarre experience had come my way I should wish to write about it. (Still less that my publisher would condone such an eccentric choice of subject.) But the relation of the individual fettered to earth through addiction with the individual who knows the light of Brahma or Jesus or Buddha, resembles that of the ant with the human being who crosses its path: no matter how certain the ant is by instinct, it cannot help itself when faced by problems which must appear transcendental to its organism. Just so in the case of the addict who attempts to solve the riddle of his own addiction. From the angle of reason, it is insoluble. 'Don't you see?' says a well-intentioned friend. 'Just look at the mess you are making of your life ! Stop ! Understand ! ... ' How can an addict understand ? And even if he wants to give it up, he cannot do so. The intentions he calls forth turn back, thoughts take flight, he cannot grasp the totality of the experience, he is afraid of exploding into a million bits of protoplasm. So he continues. And to ask a psychiatrist or the local vicar to cope with your addiction is as senseless as to ask an Indian yogi to repair a jet aircraft. Today, neither psychiatry nor religion have much to offer in the way of comfort or cure.

Hugh, a friend of mine, also shooting speed, came round to see me. He was desperately seeking to reassure himself that there was some meaning to his life and that this drug could help him find it. He had been up for the last three nights writing his 'Journal' in which he attempted to solve the riddle of the universe, seeing in his crazed eye previously invisible relations and connections between words and worlds, and himself as the sun-like source of boundless energy, ceaselessly giving, ceaselessly pouring out words without hindrance or resistance. He showed me a few pages from his never-ending work-in-progress ...

'Aquamarine light smoke the slow drift and eddy of youth in blue jeans and a painted face—sounds like chandeliers drip glitter and tinkle chime pagodas—Pont Street and Sunny South Ken sweet sounds of Donovan on a pyramid of people spotlit in a flurry of congas—the black saint dressed in tribal white moans blues and mike yells lights hurt by the finger gleams of lunatic heads creating a collage of movement—HEY BABY WHAT IS THIS ?—it happens in murmurs and purple planes of light in mauve rhythms in slow syncopated tinsel quivers and glitters in their eyes—blond hair—stripes and fragrance  
Drugs, man ?  
Sure  
Likewise ...

It all made coherent sense to me when he read it aloud, but I include it now as an illustration really of the random processes of thought which occur in states of methedrine narcosis. It was also fortunate for Hugh's reputation that, as popular prejudice against speed began to grow—and the law began to take cognizance of that prejudice—Hugh was steadily being weaned from his habit by the undemonstrative, patient and assiduous attentions of his girlfriend.

In my case, three events occurred to shake me out of any feelings of indifference. The



first was a telephone call from Texas telling me that Leary had been found guilty of transporting three ounces of marijuana across the Laredo-Mexican border as well as failing to pay taxes on it and had been fined \$40,000 and given the maximum sentence of thirty years in jail. 'That's the same what Prometheus got,' the lawyer added, somewhat casually.

The second was a half-page advertisement in the London *Evening Standard*:

'LSD—THE DRUG THAT COULD THREATEN LONDON. Just for kicks, some famous artists, pop stars, and debs are "taking a trip" on LSD—one of the most powerful and dangerous drugs known to man. It produces hallucinations. It can cause temporary insanity. Kicks like this may be bought at the appalling cost of psychotic illness or even suicide. It is banned in America and elsewhere—but is still available in London, quite legally. Still more appalling—just half an ounce of LSD could knock out London. Socially, the stuff is dynamite. *London Life* magazine has investigated LSD fully and has uncovered a social peril of magnitude which it believes demands immediate legislation ... to stop the spread of a cult which could bring mental lethargy and chaos. *London Life* reporters have also traced the man who calls himself Mr. LSD. He has given them an astonishing series of interviews. Read all about him, and about LSD, in this week's *London Life*.'

Mr. LSD was of course our President, Desmond O'Brien, and believe it or not—the reporter was Hugh, whose mind, as I have already indicated, was racing ahead of itself into the higher realms of associative paranoia due to methedrine poisoning. When I telephoned Hugh about all of this, he said that he had been so stoned that he had told the story of what was going on at the World Psychedelic Centre to the *London Life* editor who was, as it happened, the reporter who first broke the Profumo-Keeler scandal. 'This thing is bigger than the Keeler story,' he had told Hugh. But of course it was too late for me to do anything. There were even advertisements on television—spirals of colour in and out of focus and a voice saying 'LSD—the drug that could turn on London. Read the exclusive story in next week's *London Life*.'

And the third and final straw was an article in the Sunday tabloid, *The People*, that was headed in one-inch lettering.

'THE MEN BEHIND LSD—THE DRUG THAT IS MENACING YOUNG LIVES.... The drug is LSD-25—Lysergic Acid diethylamide. It is by far the most dangerous drug ever to become easily obtainable on the black market.

LSD, which is said to give "visions of heaven and hell" is used legitimately by psychiatrists to produce carefully controlled hallucinations.

In the wrong hands, the hallucinations it produces can lead to utter irresponsibility, disregard for personal safety and suicidal tendencies.

IT IS, IN FACT, A KILLER DRUG.

We have obtained evidence of "LSD parties" being held in London.

We have discovered an alarming group of people who are openly and blatantly spreading the irresponsible use of this terrible drug.

These men run what they call the Psychedelic Centre.

It has operated from a number of addresses, including one in St. James's Street, and a flat in Pont Street, Chelsea.

Amongst the Centre's activities is the publication of a handbook called *A Psychedelic Manual*.

This lists recommended doses of LSD and other drugs and antidotes, and contains a treatise on drug-induced hallucinations and other "benefits".

The manual gives various reasons for the use of drugs such as LSD. These include: "For personal power ... for ... fun ...for sensuous enjoyment ..."

The manual which is written by "B. Goldstein", says the taking of LSD and similar drugs offers "a release from our conditionings" and "senses become more acute". Recommending group sessions of drug-taking, the writer says: "A person should approach the experience with love and trust in the company of those he trusts."

"A psychedelic experience lasts normally from eight to sixteen hours ... but the results may last from several days to several months.

"The voyager should set aside at least two days for the experience itself."

This is irresponsible, dangerous gibberish.

The Centre was deserted and in a state of considerable chaos when our investigators gained entry on Thursday.

There were used hypodermic syringes, empty drug ampoules and a variety of pills.

Among the litter of papers were dozens of phone numbers, some of them of well-known show-business stars and personalities.'

A 'paranoid', according to Bill Burroughs, is someone who has some idea of what is really going on. In this sense you could say that I was a 'paranoid'. I had read the newspapers and realised that my time was up, that the police would now be on to me, so I split London for the country, though with little or no idea of where I should go or what I would do.

I rented a car through Hertz and set off for the North, to Durham to be exact, arriving there late one evening, and very, very stoned indeed. I still had several dozen ampoules of methedrine, about two ounces of hashish and a similar quantity of good grass. I spent a couple of days in Durham retracing familiar places of my early childhood, visiting family and generally grooving around. London seemed a memory only as I wandered the narrow streets and alleyways surrounding the Cathedral, a place that had become somehow unreal in my imagination, a place I did not wish to return to. But in my paranoid state (one of the real dangers of modern life), I began to suspect that the Durham police were on my heels, so I left as suddenly as I came, this time for Yorkshire and the open moors.

For the next three days I just drove and drove and drove, staying at country hotels and leaving early in the morning. I think I must have clocked up 2000 miles since leaving London. My drug intake had also increased, so much so that there were times I had to park the car because I could not see the road—my vision was blurred and distorted, and I had difficulty remembering how to change the gears or which pedal was the brake and which was the clutch. My paranoia level also increased and to such a degree that I thought I was being followed by the police (such are the delusions of the advanced methedrine-taker, who sees danger even in shadow). But the most amazing experience occurred on the fourth night. I was cruising through the lanes and by-ways of the Lake District in the early hours; there was no traffic on the roads and the countryside was still and motionless, when, suddenly, the mirror lit up and I experienced a sort of panic. Police. It could only be the police at this time of the night, and they had somehow got on to me. I immediately accelerated and sped through the lanes like an express train, swerving round corners, darting through empty villages ... but still the light in the mirror. I could not shake my pursuer, probably a cop specially trained at the Police Driving School, I reflected. Faster and faster I sped. And still the light in the mirror. Sheer panic. I was trembling all over. Terror gripped my soul. I was like an animal being chased by a pack of dogs, with no hole to dive into. Then I saw an open farmyard, and turning into it, I drove through the potted yard until I came to a narrow path overgrown with grass. But it was straight and somehow I managed to keep on the path. I must have driven three or four miles along this bumpy grassy path when the headlights picked up a gate blocking the path, and for a moment I was tempted to accelerate and smash my way through it, as they seem to be able to do in the cheaper American movies. But I stopped, and very fortunately so, because when I got out of the car to open this 'gate' I discovered that it was a barrier fence with a drop of about 100 feet to a river below. And that the 'path' was not a path at all but a disused railway track with the railway lines removed. My next discovery was equally surprising—the 'light' I had been picking up in my mirror and which I had believed was the light beam of a pursuit police-car was only the reflection of a full moon ! I was being chased by the moon. And it was this extraordinary hallucination that brought me back to some kind of sanity again, and I slowly backed my way to the

farmyard and on to the road again, where I parked the car and fell asleep, thankful that I had had such a lucky escape from certain death.

At dawn, when my head was a little clearer, I decided that I had had enough of this fantasy existence and, at a leisurely speed, drove back to London and to my flat in Pont Street. Strange! Back in the face of this flaming world I am reminded of the serenity of the Buddha. And my mad car ride was like a dream, induced by all the drugs; I had been to hell, but the flames had done me no damage; they were as harmless as shadows.

... A new dawn breaks. Once more, as on the first day of creation, I am born. The laughing moon, insecure and pale, hurries away from the flaming sun in a sweeping curve. The silver has changed into a dull red. The black background which but a few hours ago threatened to absorb me, reveals itself now as a grey crust of dross. And I am back in reality once more. A thought strikes me: must addicts all contend with a nissu to self-destruction? In my case, it is only bad temper that keeps me going ... the blessing of *Siva. Bom!*

## 7. The New Heresy

### Six accused in Chelsea drugs case

'Arrested at a flat in Pont Streets Chelsea, yesterday evening, an artist, writer, physician, company director and an art dealer and his wife were each remanded on £100 bail until March 18 at Marlborough Street today.

All were charged with unauthorised possession of cannabis sativa (Indian Hemp).

They are:

Joseph Chase Hunt Mellen, 25, writer; John Laurence Doyle, 29, art director; and Mrs Monica Doyle, 23, all of Pont Street; Sheldon Cholst, 41, American physician and author of Pembridge Square, Bayswater; Mark Anthony Warman, 21, company director, of Bywater Street, Chelsea; and Michael John Hollingshead, 34, artist, and occupier of the flat, who was also accused of permitting it to be used for smoking cannabis.'

Being busted is like going bald. By the time you realise it is happening it is too late to do very much about it. So one tries to minimise the consequences as best one can, though of course the damage is already done. Later, perhaps, it may even become one of those stories that, suitably edited, you tell against yourself...

No one was particularly surprised when the police raided my flat. The place was a centre for all kinds of psychedelic experimentation, and it was only a matter of time before someone complained or turned me in. There had been a number of 'incidents' surrounding the history of this flat, such as a party attended by some eighty guests who got accidentally turned on via a spiked fruit-and-wine punch, amongst whom were some police spies masquerading as hippies. There was also the problem of noise since the speakers were seldom off, always playing at full volume. Yet despite all this, I observed the scene with complete indifference; I was in any case unable or unwilling to do very much about it. It was an oversight I was to 'learn to regret', as the saying goes. Indeed, yes, it was, for I had not expected anything quite so serious as it subsequently all turned out.

I think this was due in part to the fact that Leary himself had been busted in Laredo, Texas, only a short time before the police in London got after me. Tim had been passing through Laredo on his way to Mexico with his daughter, Susan, and his son, Jackie, and Susan had a small stash of grass hidden in her brassiere, which the American customs found. Tim did the only thing a parent could do under such circumstances, he admitted that the grass was his and that he knew where it had been hidden. The Texan judge sentenced him to thirty years' imprisonment. And Susan got off. The American Establishment had got their man.

But this left me in a somewhat difficult situation in London, for the plan had been that Tim would join me before Easter for a big Psychedelic Rally, possibly even at the Albert Hall, with pop musicians, poets and members of the British underground taking part. I had

come on ahead to set it up, and, like a juggler, I had several things suspended in mid-air at any one time in the sure knowledge that when Tim came he would be able to act as my 'apologist' and catch them. Now that he was unable to leave America, I suddenly found everything tumbling about my head. My world had come crashing down and I was unable or strangely unwilling to do much about it. I simply let events take their course, that's all. It was difficult to explain any of this to either the judge or the jury. The 'politics of ecstasy' was a completely foreign world to them, and one moreover they seemed to equate with drug-taking of the very worst kind. I had also violated the law. I was now liable for a penalty of ten years' imprisonment and a fine of £1000.

Yet despite the seriousness of the charges and the fact that I would almost certainly be found guilty, I treated the whole matter as an exercise in breathtaking intellectual negligence. It seemed to me that the whole purpose of the British legal system, with its roles and rules and rituals, is to convince you that, by its gravity and seriousness, it knows better than you do. And it was through this insight that I decided to defend myself rather than have a barrister do it.

I had also taken some LSD before arriving at court, which enhanced the unreality of the scene, myself high in the witness box on a charge of getting high, the judge in his robes and wig, the jury banked in rows like eggs, a gallery filled with plain and faceless men, and I saw myself as an actor in a B-movie.

There was one exchange I remember; it was during my cross-examination of a Detective Sgt. Dalton of the London Flying Squad, who had arrested me in the first place. The case had begun to drag a little. The witnesses—for the prosecution—were uniformly serious in their evidence. They all made me look like some kind of horrible pervert who took non-prescription drugs as for themselves it would be, say, whisky or beer. The scene had become 'heavy'. Now that Dalton was in the witness-box, I could try to lighten the proceedings a little, and addressing myself to him, I asked him to tell the court what he had done when he first entered the bathroom, where the marijuana had been found.

'I went over to the toilet-bowl,' he replied.

'Very good, you went over to the toilet-bowl,' I said, carefully lowering my voice so that it was almost a whisper. 'And did you see anything in there ?'

'Excuse me, but I didn't hear the question.'

I raised my voice slightly: 'Did you see anything when you looked into the toilet-bowl ?'

'Yes. I saw some leaves of what I believed to be *cannabis sativa* floating on the surface of the water.'

'So,' I said, my voice in rising crescendo, 'you saw some grass floating about in the toilet. Well, isn't that a good place for it, then—in the toilet-bowl?'

I thought it was a good joke, and inoffensive, but I was told later that it had probably cost me an extra six months on my sentence.

As it was, I was unprepared for the sentence—twenty-one months for less than an ounce of hashish and a negligible amount of marijuana. It seemed altogether too long and I must have just stood in the dock in utter amazement, for the next thing I knew was being grabbed on both sides and propelled down the staircase to the cells under the court, there to await the Black Maria or something, to take me and the other new prisoners to Wormwood Scrubs.

When my name was finally called, I was brought out and handcuffed and put in the van. And it was a strange sensation to observe London through the grillwork and glass, handcuffed, and coming down off a trip. It also happened that the van actually drove past my old flat, and I wondered how I would have reacted if a few weeks earlier someone had said that one day I would be passing the place under the exact circumstance I described. It was all very curious.

Soon enough, however, we reached the Scrubs, a huge mausoleum of a place that could have been built as a Victorian factory, with high walls and gothic towers, dustbin-dirty in the way of railway stations, and rife with the smell of incontinence of urine. I felt as if I were entering the bowels of the earth. I don't think that I have ever been quite so depressed as I was for those first few minutes in prison. My soul turned grey, if such a thing is possible. I felt drained of all light in this netherworld place in which it was

impossible to imagine how anything had ever been young or beautiful. My sensibilities simply turned themselves off in the face of this monstrous universe. I could have been a stick a stone, a zombie, for here there were none who could empathise with my plight. But after a night's sleep, my heart began to revive, and my curiosity about my unknown daily routine got the adrenalin working. There was also the novelty of getting into my new prison clothes—a striped shirt with a black tie, socks about quarter of an inch thick, a pair of trousers and military-style jacket made of thick material, and a pair of heavy marching boots. Nothing fitted properly, of course. Oh, I felt like a walking scarecrow, which was probably the intention anyway.

I had no sooner got dressed than the landing officer unlocked the cell and told me to go down and get breakfast. The noise in the hall and passageways was quite deafening, redolent with the sound of male voices, hoots of laughter, crashing metal and bells. It was like living inside a huge alarm-clock, I reflected, as I made my way down the narrow iron staircase to the main hall. Prison is one huge sensory deprivation tank, an incredible human vault that echoes to the least footfall. It is a way of life to suit a sort of monk. Breakfast consisted of a plate of watery porridge, a couple of table-spoon measures of milk, a dry sausage, as much bread and marge as you could eat, and a mug of tea. After breakfast, I was told to go back to my cell where I would be called during the morning to see the Governor who liked to meet each new charge. He would also allocate my work.

My cell was not very big. The walls had been painted a sickening pink, the colour of corned beef, and the cell door was a bright green. Light entered through a barred window recessed some two feet into the wall. There was a table, a plank hard chair, a bed, and a metal chamberpot. To look out of the window you had to stand on the table, and it was possible to discern in the distance beyond the high prison wall the contours of the city, to look out nostalgically at all the lightness of heart and foot going past in the park, never knowing for sure whether you would ever rejoin it. This is something of what it means to be a prisoner.

The morning passed with monstrous slowness. A prison sentence is a certain fixed period of enforced idleness. Things—I was to learn—have their own momentum of realizability. You can rush your life on the outside by the scruff of its neck, but in prison everything happens according to the rules. It is a permanent 'working to rule', you might say; rushing anything would be like trying to rush a stalactite. So one needs to be philosophical about the slowness of it all and develop the necessary mental and physical yogas to overcome inertia, impatience and boredom. It's not so strange this world as so different.

Like most new inmates, I suppose, I went through quite a few mental changes during those first few days. They were appallingly difficult. My head was ambushed by depression and stagnation, and it seemed that I was beset with all sorts of cares, existential longings to be free again, angst. I think that to be locked up without freedom—that is, without access to love—is something you have to adapt yourself to, for man cannot live by bread alone. We like to think it. And of course we should, but we really cannot, you know. Individual human life needs the closeness of another body, a warm hand or look, the occasional kiss and merging with another. The inhuman regimen of prison existences does not allow for spontaneity with joy, but dictates a certain style of living in a prescribed manner, always to form, always to rules accepted as facts. It is indeed an experience of so-called reality. I continue to be amazed that there are so few suicides, singly or even on mass scale, a reaction to the tyranny of a system that allows bodies of men to press on the bodies of men, and usually for so little reason. But with patience and the passing of time, the mind-body adapts itself, trying as best it can to keep a little flame of humanity alight in the dark, womanless silence, and later, even achieve a simple affirmation of the world. You must or otherwise you would die. So you live on in the hopefulness that once beyond these walls your heart will quicken and your tongue renew. I think prison is really dedicated to the idea that we should think of ways in which to bring each other down not up, and is thus the antithesis of the aims of our new 'psychedelic revolution'.

When the Governor finally sent for me, I was taken to the main administration block, and

told to remove my shoes before entering his office. I saw the reason for this when I went inside. The Governor sat at a desk about fourteen feet from where I stood. We were separated by glossy linoleum as smooth and as slippery as an ice-rick. It seemed that inmates were sometimes in the habit of reacting violently to the Governor's decisions, and this (almost) foolproof method protected him from assault. He had of course nothing to fear in that way from myself.

The Chief Prison Officer gave my number and name to the Governor, who looked up and asked me if I had ever been to prison before. 'No, but I've worked in a prison.' 'In this country ?' the Governor asked.

'No, in America, at a maximum security prison. I was with a group of people from Harvard who used to run LSD sessions for some of the inmates—revelation followed by reformation, that sort of stuff.'

'Yes, I see. Now, it seems you were charged with possession of dangerous drugs. And that is why you are here now. It seems a pity that someone like yourself who is obviously well-educated and literate should find consolation in drugs. How is such a thing possible ?'

Like the New York call-girl from Radcliff who is asked how a nice girl like her came to be in such an occupation, I replied 'Just lucky, I guess.'

The Governor also expressed concern about what work to give me. He finally settled on the steam laundry. And I was told to report there after lunch.

The chief laundry officer was an amiable sort of man who had been at the same job for twenty years. He began by showing me around the laundry. There were huge steam rollers and presses, washers and dryers, ironing rooms and drying rooms, and about thirty prisoners variously engaged in keeping the flow of laundry moving at maximum speed, or so it seemed at the time. He then showed me what I had to do. My job carried 'a lot of responsibility'; I was on the reception desk, and I had to check in and check out all the laundry and to see that what came in also tallied with what went out. A simple enough job on the face of it. There was one snag, however: the nurses' laundry. It could happen, if one didn't watch the articles like a hawk, that brassieres and panties simply 'disappeared' at some stage on the way through the various laundry processes. And a number of such articles often found their way back to the cells. My main job, the officer told me, was to see that this didn't happen. There was also a complicated system of record keeping, which was explained to me, but my brain couldn't embrace all the details and I simply 'tuned out' halfway through the hour-long laborious explanation by the officer. The result was that by the end of the third day the laundry was besieged with complaints, particularly from the nurses' home, which reported nearly a dozen panties missing and several brassieres. There were also complaints from the long-term prisoners, for whom clean laundry was one of the few remaining pleasures, who were understandably impatient that their bespoke shirts or specially fitted trousers had not been returned. I was transferred to the ironing room and told to iron shirts. Here again I seemed to get things cocked or somehow not quite right. And this time the complaints were that shirts were coming back from the laundry with big burn marks, missing buttons, and twisted collars.

Once more I found myself standing shoeless before the Governor. I had not been charged with negligence or insubordination, but the implication was there. I was given a 'second chance' and transferred to the book bindery, which is considered something of a plum of a job at Wormwood Scrubs.

The book bindery is run by a civilian, and it is quiet. In appearance it resembled a Dickensian solicitor's office, with high tables and chairs and strained faces buried in piles of books. I was put in the paperback section to be trained in the craft of hard-cover binding, a job by which none would be particularly impressed but requiring a certain amount of manual skill, nonetheless. The civilian supervisor told me in this connection that book-binding required three things: 'The first is dexterity, the second is dexterity, and the third is dexterity.'

I was glad to be away from the old steam laundry and was quite enjoying my new job when another one of those unwritten minor tragedies occurred. I had left a foot-high stack

of books in the press; the new covers had been glued on and the idea was to let them dry overnight. This was the culmination of a week's work, and I was naturally excited to see how the finished products looked in the morning. The civilian supervisor came over with me to unscrew the press and see what kind of a job I had made on my first assignment. He began to turn the handle; and his dismay was equal to my own, for all the bindings had stuck together with the result that the books rose as one, in concertina fashion, and then crashed on to the floor, sending loose pages all over the place. The civilian supervisor stood for a moment, his mouth wide open, and then said very, very slowly, and with great pathos: 'Good God! Good God! Good God!' (I was with him on the first two all right, but he lost me on the third.)

That was the end of my stay in the book bindery. A complaint was made to the Governor who immediately despatched me to a foetid factory building to sew mailbags, the final degradation, no doubt, for after mailbags there is nowhere further down the work rung to go, except possibly being a waiter in the Prison Officer's Mess.

With the slowness of the Himalayan range, it seemed, my average uneventful days passed into routinely ordinary weeks. There had been quite a bit of news about hash and LSD in the daily Press, mainly about people getting busted, so that by the beginning of the summer quite a few of my friends were inside with me—Nick Douglas, the painter; Hugh Blackwell, the writer; Hugh Lansdowne, the poet; Pat Ryan, the musician; Robert Fraser, the art gallery owner; and John Hopkins, one of the editors of the *International Times* of whom Christopher Logue wrote in his poem:

'Mistakes like mine occur  
Bored with the cosy spiral of my galaxy  
I went off limits  
And time slammed around me like  
The door into a pillar box.'

And there were to be several hundred more 'psychedelic' inmates in British jails before the year was out.

The Press was having a field-day on the topic. Pot and LSD were the new twin menaces of our Western kind of society, evils which had to be stamped out. 'At least 100,000 more Britons will take psychedelic drugs this year in spite of new provisions in the Dangerous Drugs Act of 1966,' said one headline, and went on to say that this figure was the result of twelve-month nationwide survey conducted by a Dr. Jim Marle, the Atlantic psychiatrist, at a meeting in Oxford.

In fact this was more likely to happen *because* of the provisions in the Dangerous Drugs Act. Restrict anything and immediately people want it. There must be thousands of readers now buying grass and LSD who would never have done so but for articles of this kind; and quite a few I daresay now believe that LSD is compulsory, like vaccination or fluoridation. Besides, total prohibition has never worked.

Yet drugs is a subject that can never come under discussion without so much emotion that rational argument becomes obscured if not totally banished. The Press, and to some extent publishers as well, seem to delight in touching people where they are most vulnerable—producing articles and books which threaten the incredulous and the superstitious. Whenever one of these articles or books appears in public they set off a chain of articles or letters, each more heated than the last. This is possible because the problems concerned with drugs are not susceptible to single convulsive solutions. It is as though where questions of morality come in that detachment quits the scene.

And often the Press would slant a particular piece so that not even an idiot reader could miss the point. One example comes to mind, also from this period in the mid-sixties. It is from the now defunct *Daily Sketch*. It showed a photograph of Leary, smart and serious in a suit, deep in conversation with the reporter. The article was headed 'I'll Turn On Britain, says the leader of the Drug Church'. And Leary is then quoted as saying: 'I don't imagine I shall run into as much opposition for my religion in Britain as I have here in the States. The British are more tolerant and have a sense of humour.'

The question of drugs inside the prison was also a matter of some concern, for as the 'psychedelic' inmate population rose, and as other prisoners became cognizant of the phenomena LSD and hashish, there was a corresponding increase in their availability. Many ways were used to get psychedelics in, from felt-tip pens stuffed with Red Lebanese to bunches of grapes spiked with acid. I myself had a reasonably steady supply of hashish, and a stash of LSD which Richard Alpert and Owsley had left during their visit to the Scrubs. There was very little if anything the prison authorities could do to stop it.

Naturally, I would often be approached by other prisoners to tell them something about these drugs, or they simply wanted to score. And as a general rule, I would share any hashish I might happen to have, whilst refusing to give them LSD, that is, unless they were already pretty experienced in using it. There were exceptions, however, most notable of these being George Blake, the spy then serving a sentence of forty-three years' imprisonment. He had served about five years of his sentence when I met him. And it was not long before we were having long discussions about 'turning on'; and he said he would like to try it.

We decided to run a session on the Sunday, when the cells in 'D' Hall are left open all afternoon and one can roam at will about the landings without supervision. Blake's cell was on the ground floor, comfortably furnished with a carpet and curtains, a bookcase stuffed with books and, on the table, a short-wave radio, which he had somehow acquired in order 'to listen to Arabic language stations'.

Nothing much happened for the first hour. But as the session developed, Blake became quite tense, a nervous strain verging on complete paranoia, and seemed to believe that I was a Secret Service agent who had administered him a truth serum. He told me that I'd be killed within the next twenty-four hours, and made other similar threats. I felt quite baffled as to what to do, so I did nothing, merely listened as he went through his flip-out, and tried to reassure him by means of treating the whole affair as if it were all somehow something quite ordinary strewn into the everyday, though secretly I was quite alarmed in case a prison officer happened to look in and hear what was going on.

He finally settled down, however, and the last couple of hours were spent in deep thought and quiet reflection concerning his future existence, and he said he might not be able to stand up to many more years of incarceration. I suggested they'd probably let him out on parole in a few years' time, but he doubted this. He felt that he was in prison as a living warning to others who might be similarly tempted. But I said that was an old cliché, and had never worked anyway.

As it happened, Blake escaped only a few weeks after the session, by scaling the wall one Sunday afternoon by means of a rope-ladder thrown over by an accomplice, who had been in touch with him via the short-wave radio in his cell. When I last heard about him, he was living in Moscow and working for the Cairo Section of the Russian Foreign Ministry.

I had been at Wormwood Scrubs for about four months when I was asked about going to an 'open prison' at Leyhill, near the English-Welsh border. I said I'd prefer the country. And shortly after this interview, I was transferred to Leyhill Prison.

Leyhill was in some sense a reprieve from the double-dense monotony of a 'closed' prison like the Scrubs, where no-life and all-life hang precariously together there. Here in the country one could not only see the beauty of the natural landscape but also feel it, and I am eternally grateful to whoever it was who got me there.

Upon arrival, I was taken to the kitchen and given a dinner of fried eggs, bacon, beans and chips, freshly baked rolls and butter some cake, and coffee. The Duty Officer told me that there were some 450 inmates and two night guards, that there were no walls or fences surrounding the prison, and that anyone was free to escape at any time.

I was then shown into a dormitory of about fourteen people and given a bed and bedside locker. Pat Ryan, the musician, occupied the bed on my right, and Jerry, a singer and lyricist, the one on my left. They had both been busted for hashish. A couple of others in the dormitory had also been similarly busted for possession, and not a few of the ordinary



prisoners were starting to smoke.

I was called to meet the Governor the next morning. He was an amiable, elderly Scot, who managed our meeting very well. He told me that this was his retirement year, that his wife was dying of cancer, and that he was a lover of Robert Burns and Ella Wheeler Wilcox. He suggested that I join both the bridge club and the debating club, help start a flying club, and apply for a course in fish ecology at nearby Bristol University, all of which I subsequently did.

My first job at Leyhill was as a waiter at the Prison Officers' Training School, which was sited in the former Earl of Duncu's estate and house, next to the prison. It was a good job as it meant in effect that one ate civilian food, which made quite a change from the plain prison fare. And the work was far from boring. I would wait on about four tables at which would be four trainee prison officers attending their eight-week induction course. I was probably the first live prisoner they had ever seen. And it was interesting to observe their reactions.

My initial approach would never vary. I'd meet them at the table on their first day, extend my hand to each one, and welcome them individually. By the end of the second day they all knew why I was in prison. And by the end of the week, our conversation was generally about ways to get high. Some of the groups were quite generous, and would slip me the occasional bottle of wine. Some let me use their billiard room. Some even said they were looking forward to meeting me again at some point in my future, when they would see that I got an easy deal. They were a pleasant crowd, by and large, mostly respectable working-class, who needed some kind of job with tenure in order to keep their game going. It was a job. It gave financial security. It made their respectability possible.

Life at Leyhill had a particular flavour all its own. Physically, the layout was perfect. There was a huge sports ground with cricket, rugby, and soccer pitches, running tracks, and places to fly your kite. The Duncu estate contained an arboretum filled with trees and bushes from every part of the world, a constant delight to both mind and eye. There was one tree in particular I was attracted to. It was Japanese and, I believe, magical, whose flowering one spring turned me on to the plant kingdom. The exquisite beauty of this tree was like a window in which you could see the existence of this Other World. And it was a point of routine for me to spend most of my lunch time smoking praises for Shankar in the half-lotus position under the boughs of this holy tree.

One of the highlights of my stay at Leyhill was the production of a physio-psychedelic musical called *Paradise Lost — The True Story*, which had been sent to me by Joey Mellen, friend and former associate from Pont Street, who had decided that the best way to stay permanently 'high' was by trepanning a hole in his head the size of the old sixpenny piece. The play was a strange mixture of Milton and Mellen, with lyrics in praise of trepanation or 'getting the hole'. I reproduce one of the songs below, called 'The Great Brain Robbery':

#### THE GREAT BRAIN ROBBERY

By Joe Mellen

Up stood the ape—down came the drag—  
The beginning of the blues—  
Can't talk your way out of it adult  
Daddy there's a drag on you.

Oh adult the mistakes you make  
You ignorant little man  
Adult oh the liberties you take  
You mistaken little man.

Between your meals you make your deals  
And send your sons to war  
Talk all you want but don't you know  
We've heard it all before.

Adult will you never see

All you want is to agree—  
 The lies you tell to save your face  
 Constitute your grave disgrace.  
  
 You're losing and you think you're gaining  
 It's just your ego needs maintaining  
 Adult d'you know what is true ?  
 The drag is bearing down on you.  
  
 What you're trying to regain  
 Is blood belonging to your brain  
 Will you know before you're dead  
 That paradise is in your head ?  
  
 You was robbed—so you made belief—  
 It's gravity—we've caught the thief  
 All you prayers won't save your soul  
 Adult you need a hole.

Another song, called 'Brainbloodvolume', has been set to music by Julie Felix in her furthest-out number yet.

#### BRAINBLOODVOLUME

It was lost and now it's found again  
 Don't drive it underground again  
 Brainbloodvolume—  
 They call it love and heaven above  
 Some take it for the hell of it  
 That's sugarlack—  
 Brainbloodvolume—  
 It's you it's me it's good  
 Understood ?  
 Brainbloodvolume.  
  
 It's what the poets have written for  
 Painters have painted for  
 Priests have prayed for  
 Prisons have filled for  
 Soldiers have killed for  
 Brainbloodvolume.  
  
 It's what the pipes have been smoked for  
 Witches have been cloaked for  
 Headstands have been done for  
 The whole thing was begun for  
 It's what the world was made for  
 The price must be paid for—  
 Brainbloodvolume.

It was necessary to approach the Governor to obtain permission to stage it in the prison theatre, perhaps even before an invited audience of students from Bath and Bristol universities. I decided to plug the Milton section at the expense of the rest, feeling that the Governor would be more sympathetic to it than the modern additions. The Governor was most attentive during my outline of the play, and wrote a memo to the Prison Chaplain that he should consider staging it one Sunday in the Church. Accordingly, I met with the Chaplain, a nice, easygoing man with a strong sense of Christian vocation, who had been at Leyhill for four years and had a good understanding of prisoner psychology. I introduced the matter by suggesting that there is a mystery in

the story of *Paradise Lost* that lies at the heart of all our lives. And this is older than that of Oedipus. In the play there are overtones of the great four stories of the world's various religions, and specifically of the Hebrew-Christian tradition. Guilt and Sin are pretty powerful themes of the Christian Church, and any attempt to understand their place in the world and their relevance to contemporary man was, I assured him, a matter of concern to today's criminal. One begins by depicting man as some kind of "hairless talking ape" who is unable to benefit from the possibilities of his own existence, who then has a revelation, in this instance, through piercing a small hole through his skull to increase the volume of blood to the brain.

The Chaplain looked puzzled. 'But what has *Paradise Lost* got to do with making holes in your head?' he asked.

'Well, the theory is that by increasing the amount of blood to the brain the surface of the capillaries—millions of them—increases, which in turn release glucose from the blood into the brain cells. This is the physiological secret of "getting high". So the "hairless talking ape" who does not know that his "fall" (loss of brainbloodvolume) has a purely physiological cause. Thus he lives out his simple life or death without ever realising his golden future, truly the parable of fallen man.'

'It sounds all rather godless to me.'

'Well, the modern writer uses myths and metaphors in order to get his message across. And in the case of this play, he has found modern counterparts to the story of the Fall in poetry, science, and music to express an awareness that we all have, however obscurely, that there are vast capacities in man which he continually fails to realise. The message of the play is simple. If things are not right inside yourself, then change them. The evolutionary leap in being from monkey to man produced a new kind of animal, a creative animal, an animal with imagination, who could devise ways to regain the lost paradise of lost brainbloodvolume.'

'But why trepanation?' the Chaplain persisted.

'Because trepanation offers a solution on a manageable scale.'

'A solution to what?'

'A solution to the problem of staying "high".'

'But what has staying "high" got to do with putting on a musical play in my Church?'

'The Governor and I thought that because of the religious themes you might...'

'But I find the whole thing utterly "godless", and I could never allow such a production to be shown. And now that you have explained it to me, I doubt whether I could allow it to be performed in the theatre. Prisoners are very suggestible you know, and we could not risk wholesale trepanations. It is just what the *Daily Express* are looking for. I really think, Hollingshead, that you ought to concentrate instead on more practical plans for your own future than try to launch a social movement based on people putting holes in their heads. Have you ever considered the profession of the church?'

'I'm sorry you don't like the play. I thought you would. What we are seeing today is merely the visible aspect of a universal neurosis, and the Fall myths, in whatever language, illustrate humanity's unconscious awareness of human suffering, which is the failure of humanity which *Paradise Lost* symbolises. God is simply a creative power which is part of human life in the Garden. A voice within man tells him that he can and should regain the lost brainblood of childhood—should exercise some degree of control over his own consciousness, in other words, which is the message of the new developing religions in the West. The problem facing the established Church is that if man lived up to his full creative capacities, there would be no religion.'

We decided to go ahead anyway, and started rehearsals. Hugh Landsdowne, a poet and magician, who had been imprisoned for growing half an acre of marijuana at his farm in Essex, linked in the *I Ching*; and together we made a huge stroboscopic mandala with an electric motor we pinched from one of the machines in the tailor's shop. The play was never performed in either the church or the theatre, due to the misunderstanding as to what the play was actually about; but it was seen by most of the inmates at some point in its actual unfolding; and helped keep our minds off more dangerous matters.

I tend to remember perhaps only the positive things about my last year in prison. Yet in all

honesty I cannot rid myself of the thought that my life there might have been very, very different indeed. I think all of us carry around in our heads some picture of how we imagine prison life to be, though doubtless altogether impossible to identify in reality. Mine was a superstitious mixture of Gestapo camps and what I had seen in American movies. The reality is quite different; there is, for instance, very little real fear of the intentions of the prison authorities, who tend to stick to a rule book that does not include physical brutality or torture or idiosyncratic sadism. There is also very little physical violence going on between inmates, though incidents happen from time to time, like anywhere else. Man is only human after all. And violence is part of his human nature. And yet... the experience of prison is a painful one. It may be no more than an enduring slight headache, but it is always there, forever encroaching on your private world, an impersonal, indifferent environment in which you are physically contained; and all for the greater public good. Prison is a feeling, a subjective as well as a purely physical thing. It hits directly at your sensations, but acting more like a dampener than an actual brake. It lowers by its sense of decay, its corridors of refuse, its wasteland approach to fallen humanity. No wonder one feels saddened to observe how as our twentieth century develops so too does the machinery of incarceration and the illegality of our various legal actions, who seek to condemn even the children who comprise our future brave generation.

Prison is some kind of other place in which I would never wish for anyone to have to live out their simple life or death.

## 8. 'Where the Wild Things Are'

### Scandinavia 1967

'And when he came to the place where the wild things are they roared their terrible roars and gnashed their terrible teeth and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws till Max said "BE STILL!" and tamed them with the magic trick of staring into all their yellow eyes without blinking once and they were frightened and called him the most wild thing of all and made him king of all wild things... '

(From a children's story by Maurice Sendak)

My life has something of Peer Gynt's about it, more intimate to me even than I am intimate to myself; just now I happened to hear Solveig's song on the radio; it quite got hold of me; to wait loyally a whole lifetime for someone... the kind of love that triumphs over the hostility of space and time and separation: this is love.

So it is not entirely without reason that it is to Norway my spirit will sometimes return, back, I suppose, to its mythological roots and the magic landscape from which it sprang. For I am at heart a Northerner, most at home in my Scandinavian Kingdoms of the snows; essentially a Tundra type.

It had been a long, steamy pig of a summer in prison and I wanted to empty its bog breath out of my bones: Norway sounded like the one good place to be. It was thus with a delicious sense of escaping from the freedom of the cage that I sat down at the First Engineer's table on the *M.S. Blenheim* as she slowly broke anchor in the Tyne at the start of a two-day voyage to Oslo. This I had arranged.... Once more Proteus expands across the space of the North Sea, returning to a place where there is someone 'who loves him best of all', to the land where the trolls and the Solveigs live—to the Gudbrandsdal Valley, to be exact.

A few days later I was sitting by myself in an outfarm high on the upper reaches and timber line of *Rayneberg* overlooking Lake Mjoesa and the town of Lillehammer, where the air is as thin and as pure as Vichy water; and all sounds are permanently sharp in the mountain stillness.

Rock was now a feature of my landscape—and the tiny farm I rented sat plum in a nest of

great rocks, and it was easy to see why the old dalesman family left it for a State-provided modern apartment in the town. My window looked out over an untouched moor and the eye was drawn downwards down tousled slopes of ubiquitous bracken to the lake some 2500 feet below.

There was a prehistoric feel about the place and I now understood why it was this valley which Ibsen chose to set the home of Peer Gynt, the universal wanderer, the exile in the heart of each one of us. Yet would a Himalayan *Rishi* understand Nordic gods (which the vision of these mountains quite naturally created in my soul) were he to observe the landscape of this valley?—I think not; he would probably die of excessive cold. Yet I loved the place, especially at night, sitting by the open *peis* or fireplace, listening to the softly stirring firs outside, so silent in my solitary retreat. For my life here had something of Advent about it—waiting and hoping and getting on with ordinary things. In certain moods I'd occupy my time translating Old Norse Sagas. I found this to be an excellent aid to concentration. There is one text I particularly remember, from *Morkinskinna*, a history of twelfth-century Norwegian kings, which was compiled by an Icelander in 1220; the text is called 'Audun buys himself a white bear', which actually turned out to be something of a white elephant; the story is about one Audun who, desiring to see the world, made the dangerous voyage from Iceland to Greenland; there he exchanged his entire cargo for a single white bear. That is all. Nothing more; it is an exquisite story, exquisitely told: and in the mind of the thirteenth-century narrator, Audun's behaviour in spending his cash like this was perfectly reasonable, for Greenland was an important place at that time, and a white bear a great treasure—like a white Cadillac might be today, something whose price is simply our All and not a penny less. I also got to know a few people in the district and also in Lillehammer itself, where I would go for my weekly shopping. On one of these trips I met a Norwegian poet—whose name escapes me who invited me to attend a reading of 'Nordic poets' which he had arranged at the local Folk High School, when I could also read something myself if I so wished. A lot of people from Oslo were going to be there. And Vesaas, the celebrated author of *The Ice Palace*—by which English reviewers are not much impressed—had promised to attend.

Thus it was, on the appointed day, at the appointed time, and with due solemnity appropriate to the almost reverential sense of 'presence', if that is the right word for a rather stiff atmosphere. It reminded me more of a meeting of Kirk Elders than any poetry-reading I had been to before. Absolute seriousness is not without a dose of humour except in Norway, where it is absolutely serious that is, until the 'snaps' begins to flow, when everyone seems to get very wild and something in the structure of their thought completely snaps, as it were; it is a completely different psychophysical effect from that of getting stoned on hashish or marijuana. (A recent report by WHO, Geneva—'The Use of Cannabis' notes that 'Individuals who have no taste for the cannabis experience *per se*—regardless of moral or other considerations—are more apt to exhibit a preference of a controlled, structured, rational and secure approach to life,' as it also suggested that alcohol is much more closely associated with crime, aggression, and violence than is cannabis.)

At any rate, I had taken the precaution of smoking several joints on my way down the mountain, and arrived very stoned that is, 'quiet' and 'sensing'.... 'Those who enjoy cannabis tend to prefer an unstructured and spontaneous style of life, are relatively prone to take risks, value states of altered consciousness, and tend to seek such effects both through drugs and through other methods.' (Same WHO report).

Soon the booze began to have its effect, and the first poet—from Sweden—was helped on to the stage, where he raged through his mother tongue like a prairie fire, his bull voice crashing through our heads like falling masonry—and with about as many mixed metaphors in each line as in my description of his reading. He finally collapsed in a wave of laughter or tears, and disappeared backstage and was seen again no more.

Then followed a lady poet from Denmark, who read a series of poems on the theme of Vietnam, and in the form of imaginary letters from a Vietcong private to his mother in Haiphong, telling her about the effects on his mind of being bombed from planes 'too high

in the sky even to see'. And this had a temporary sobering effect on the listeners, who had perhaps become aware, even if ever so faintly, that they were somehow, in some way, also a bit culpable.

Three or four poets in quick succession. And then it was my turn.... 'Cannabis users are most frequently young, male, unmarried, and exhibit some instability with respect to residence, work, school and goals.' (*Ibid*)... I seated myself on the stage in the half-lotus position, lit two candles, which I put on either side of me, and asked that the hall lights be put out, which was done, though not without a bit of protest from members of a party from Oslo, who had, I gathered, been wanting to dance on one of the large tables.

There was a hush, finally. And into this silent space I inserted, *in the Danish*, Timothy Leary's translation of Tao Sutra number fourteen from the Chinese classic, the *Tao Te Ching*, which I reproduce here in its more familiar English form:

'Gazing ... they do not see it  
they call it empty space.  
Listening ... they do not hear it  
they call it silence or noise  
Groping ... they do not grasp it  
they call it intangible  
But here ...  
We ... spin through it  
Electric ... Silent ... Subtle'

And since it was the last poem of the evening, and since Tarjaas Vesaas insisted only upon us speaking what for me was the obscure dialect form of 'Nynorsk', I made my farewells and silently...softly... I spun off into a crisp, clear night of stars, gliding like a fish upstream, reaching *Ravneberg* just as a new dawn was breaking. To the sounds of the clapper of the cattle bells swinging back and forth, moving in flow, regular, without stop or start so harmoniously held...

After a few hours' quiet reflection, I realised that what had really upset me about the poetry-reading the evening before was an overheard remark following Ulla Ryum's 'Vietnam poems'... 'Det tross alt er farlig aa leve i Norge ogsaa—hva med superhighwayene og alt, ikke?' ('Despite that, it is pretty dangerous living in Norway too—what with these "superhighways" coming along and everything.') From one point of view, the person was right but I could imagine there were many in Vietnam who would gladly exchange the dangers of Norwegian highways for the sort of life they had to contend with there. But if I felt this strongly, why should I remain 'aloof with Hermit Eye'? Wasn't my situation just as much a 'cop-out' as for the indifferent majority—just living out our simple life or death? Or in some Nietzschean sense, was not my life now also a kind of 'germinative regression', an attempt to return to my roots?

I had taken to acid and later to myths and ancient stories to seek a formula that would turn the surrounding world to dust and reveal the sought for paradise.

'For now I am homesick  
after my own kind: and these people  
touch me not....'  
I remember myself as an ancient hero, a wild man  
of the mountains, a guardian of the door, a paradox—  
To sing... of heroes... Now ?  
In this forgotten age ? of giant men ?  
No!  
—Yet I shall speak  
that our giant flies might listen and would know  
the glory that man is...  
IN THE BEGINNING, then  
were men

men hard and tall, the warriors, who fought  
 with man and beast, who knew  
 the call of blood and fire, and whose swords  
 cut paths to...  
 but who shall hear this—here ?  
 The paths, the paths! Immortal paths! Cuhulain rides  
 his five fiery chariots across the firmament!  
 Arthur and Lancelot in battle! The ground shakes!  
 IN THE BEGINNING was blood and fire...  
 And now ?  
 The matters of the civilised yet impotent  
 conscience of modern society ?  
 No.  
 The sound a new-minted coin makes upon a concrete street ?  
 No.  
 Silence then ?  
 Yes—silence. Heroes are dead!  
 We buried them, and did the rites  
 And they've long forgotten us.  
 (by Kristof Konstanty Jastrzebski-Glinka)

And thus one sits, day in, day out, in urn-like silence, staring wearily into nothing—you can almost see the nothing.  
 And yet in this nothing it was something to know that it's not enough to see the light; you have to market the message. The meaning of silence is only the suspense of our breath before the storm and the stillness is nothing but the prelude to catastrophe... like a thunder-cloud in the process of materialisation, it is the tension of violence held in check. And do we notice ? Not a bit. We sail on in our aimless craft lulled in the cradle of all that is—that supremely ordinary human condition of wakefulness which accepts, without reflection, the universe as we find it. We are the proverbial 'sleepwalkers'... we experience without any awareness of the meaning of our experience of life; we are the monolithic mass who act and speak like men asleep. We are as good as dead.  
 And is acid to help us wake, or help us dream ? It can make us conscious of our own mental states as somehow dependent on the predispositions left by the world we experience as an impersonal universe; the all too personal soul fashions its own world in the imagining of dreams—the spirit serves as light for itself: or worse, we somehow see the visionary delight of the ego in its own spirituality, its purity, as if it were itself absolute and infinite.... 'Behold! from the travails of my soul, before me, above me, between heaven and earth, finite and yet all penetrating, I see a tremendous figure growing out of the nothingness of my being, the figure of One whose materialisation is the Spirit Mercurius !'—Or is it 'Aquarius' ?—there is such a pantheon of gods in the alchemic line. But about the state of *conscious wakefulness*, or *prajna*(wisdom), the Vedas tell us that it is a divine attribute in one who has become aware of the One and is full of Bliss, Bliss, Bliss.... 'In conscious wakefulness there is no need or greet, no desire, no thought, and all confusions are fused into a blessed peace; only knowledge and Bliss remain.'  
 And as for the state of 'transcendental wakefulness', the truly wise know it is incapable of being spoken of, grasped held, imagined or manipulated; it is without distinctive marks of any kind—unthinkable, unnameable, for it is that into which the essence of the knowledge of the One is resolved, it is the Peaceful, the Benign, the Non-dual. And—the metaphysical paradox!—One is the self; 'He' is to be known.  
 Whenever imaginative man penetrates into the mystical universe which surrounds him, it brings forth spirits and gods. And the creatures thus born into the world appear different according to the peculiarity of their parents—just look at all the historical pantheons, the first recorded divinities of the Vedic poets, the gods of the Old Testament, the Egyptian and Greek gods—sometimes maternal, sometimes paternal... But the unknowable,

unnameable, ungraspable 'He' is at the root of them all, and thus the source of all that was, and is, and will be, living as an ancestor continues to live in His distant descendants. And occasionally 'He' appears again in His own intrinsic form. 'He' is not Jahveh neither is he Allah nor the Vishnu of the Hindus; 'He' is none of the historical Gods, for 'He' is nameless. But when 'He' appears we know it—it was 'He' whom the tribes of Israel saw in the wilderness, as it was also 'He' before whom the Aryans of the Himalayas once trembled.

Thus Leary himself writes in each generation a few men stumble upon the riddle of consciousness and its solution; they discover, once again, that beyond the ordinary world of macroscopic tangible, material things, there are endless levels of energy transformations accessible to consciousness. They learn again the age-old lesson taught by mystics and wise men of East and West: that most of mankind is sleepwalking, moving somnabulistically through a world of rote perceptions and conflicting emotions. As have many internal explorers of the past, they become dedicated to the process of consciousness expansion, to the ideal of maximum wakefulness and internal freedom. It is perhaps significant that the psychedelic experience, which has been popularised by Leary through his lectures and books in America, has not helped a single American to a higher education and here I do not exclude myself—but, on the other hand it has brought all the more into hospitals and jails. LSD is considered, even in India, as dangerous. Or is it that it takes a very great deal of acid to produce even a little elevation of consciousness. The fact is, no one has yet proved that an increase of individual human awareness—drug-induced or not—is appropriate to the organisation of twentieth-century society in the West; it may be that it does more harm than good in the case of most people.

No, I think the psychedelic experience does something quite different—it is not a question of the validity of facts or even of personal manifestation of the spirit, but *of becoming aware in oneself of how to fashion a new and better reality.*

I wanted to go on living in Norway, but however well one tries to understand oneself and sort out one's priorities for happiness, reality is forever getting in the way. You never know what you will be doing until you find yourself doing it, mysteriously at work again. I had been toying with the idea of writing a book about my experiences in America, something positive and forward-looking, reflecting somehow the optimism I had for the future, the 'practical Utopia' of the Underground's manifesto of liberation. My need to communicate was very great indeed, but it had nothing to do with the ego or things like that; it was, I think, something similar to the urge that compelled Marco Polo to write about his travels. But there are two things more important than writing—*action* and *meditation*—and I was impelled by the former. There is perhaps a transcendentalist anticipation of what I mean in Emerson's address on the American Scholar:

'The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is transferred to the record. Instantly the book becomes noxious. the guide is a tyrant. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude having once received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outcry if it is destroyed. Colleges are built on it. Meek young men grow up in libraries. Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my orbit, and make a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world, of value, is *the active soul.*'

Books make bondage. But the bondage is to an authority outside ourselves. Freedom lies in getting control of our own lives back into our own hands—'to stand on one's own two feet'—and everyone united by mutual affection with personal relations as the touchstone, creating an environment of creativity and harmony. But it will take a miracle to free the human mind: because the invisible reins and chains are magical in the first place; and each individual will only free himself in the measure that he knows how to locate and discover his own proper powers. Whitman, likewise in a transcendentalist sermon says, 'You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through the eyes of the



dead, nor feed on the spectres in books.' And the man who is not possessed of an active soul, or of a self-conscious able to recognise that it is everywhere in chains to authority outside itself, will not know how to set about the task of magical self-liberation. But to concentrate oneself in this direction is a thing which very few individuals of the West have ever known how to do, for to the rational mind the ideal of a 'practical Utopia' accomplished on earth is an apparently impossible task. It would seem to depend upon direct incarnation of the soul/spirit/Christ in each individual if he or she were to give direct expression of spiritual values in daily life.

Our Western philosophers have always been rationalists, for their insights do not depend upon the awakening of their own souls (most philosophers lead private lives that are really quite hellish sometimes) but upon a special facility in their treatment of symbols which awaken spiritual/religious/philosophical associations in the mind of the reader. Any true change would have to be based on a different concentration from that of reason. We must create ourselves out of whatever it is that is within ourselves, unconcerned with standardized answers, the so-called scientific methods: it has an inner rhythm, like that of music. Or, as my Guru puts it, 'We must first recognise Atman within ourselves, and then realise him in the world; we should assist Brahman, whose partial expression we are, to perfect himself in appearance.' And this is something beyond all power of words—Life is not an art so much as an experience. 'With the Pillar of Fire goes the Pillar of Cloud.' At dawn, a pair of trousers; at noon, a cloud. But such mysteries are unpublishable except as poetry, the veiled truth. This is also the new doctrine of Ezra Pound, who says: 'Prose is not education but the outer courts of the same. Beyond its doors are the mysteries. Eleusis. Things not to be spoken of save in secret The mysteries *self-defended*, the mysteries that cannot be revealed Fools can only profane them. The dull can neither penetrate the secretum nor divulge it to others.'

What is the poet doing in trying to express mystical reality objectively ? He is looking for a scheme which would circumscribe it from all sides. And if he describes its contours clearly and correctly, then every other intelligent human being could place the content there for himself, so that he might believe that the poet had shown the 'thing'. But that is impossible. All the poet has done is to present a frame for that which we must be conscious of anyhow in order to recognise it. And recognition is liberation

That is perhaps why people who have had a psychedelic experience can 'tune-in' to the secret and occult, in which God is better honoured and loved by silence than by words, and better seen by closing the eyes to images than by opening them. So let's not try to understand everything. LSD may provide you with a clue as to what is happening. It opens the Doors of Perception and beyond those doors who can really say ?

There is no future, with modern man and man of the future, which does not resemble what 'free' people are doing in the world. All are trying to get control over the making of their own lives; growing their own food in country meadows or backyards, building their own homes out in the forests, learning how to farm 'liberated' land and live off the produce of the sea; learning how to bake their own bread... and learning to love one another as one enormous family, and with a conscious relation to, or respect for, the environment.

And this implies, in one word, Revolution, not the revolution against the 'given' which has since the time of Hegel provided the avant-garde with an excuse for anarchist expression or behaviours—the answer from the outside—but the revolution within the self. Total Revolution is inner-change-in-the-world; the tools are a cultural framework which bypasses (transcends) the existing projection structure; and 'religion' is an artistic tool for getting there, through image, vision and symbol's symbol. ONE METAPHOR CAN CHANGE THE WORLD: 'Peace of Mind brings Peace on Earth ?'—Yes, but only if we recognise how the ego is the cause of all the wars inside the human mind and, by implication, also of all the wars in the world-at-large.

How strange that I 'should' do anything again! But these 'revolutionary' ideas were becoming decisive: action would decide the rightness or wrongness of our ideas, success that of volition. It is not enough to take your ease in the world of ideas and live there

naively, as I had earlier thought, for this would mean that we had merely allowed ourselves to be driven by the stream of events. We have to know how to guide ourselves to the goal. I found it increasingly difficult simply to sit and reflect on all this, for there was still the job of translating recognition into action. I could not hope to 'change myself' through 'meditation'—a temperament like mine collapses under the burden of living in another kind of existence that simply 'is' and needs the challenge of 'should' in order to realise the goal of 'becoming', which is, I suppose what our Western sort of life is all about—we believe we 'should' *grow, become, create, perform, perfect again*, and this is the impetus for conscious volition, since our ideas remain nonexistent until they have been tested in reality, with the self as the first testing ground. From the point of view of the world, it is mere illusion, if a holy man regards himself as an incarnation or a Saint he must *become* saintly, change himself, if he wishes to be taken seriously. In my own case, I felt strongly that I should return to America, see how my old psychedelic friends were making out on their 'voyages of self-discovery', meet Tim and Richard Alpert again, perhaps even settle over there for a time and try to build a structure in which I could exist without losing sight of my goal. But it was a difficult decision to make, seeing how I had been out of touch for so long. And apart from considerations like these, there was the fact that life in America actually scared me stiff. If paranoia is 'having some idea of what is really going on', then you could say that I was definitely paranoid about returning to our brave New World. Just thinking about New York could send icicles up and down my spine.... my paranoia took the form of imagining myself walking alone on 11 5th Street from Riverside to Broadway at midnight, or equally—due to some error in my direction—ending up, an object of unpleasant attention by members of the 'Roach Guards' or the 'Five Points Gang', in Broome Street down on the Bowery... At any rate, my fears and doubts were overcome somewhat by Christmas, and early in January I found myself once again airborne over the Atlantic on a flight that was to land me a few hours later at Boston's Logan Airport, and the start of a new chapter...

## 9. 'A Gram is Worth More Than a Damn'

1968

'Turn on to acid, man,  
Get into the channels of your mind  
Go see what there is to find—  
No one knows the human mind...

There are doors as yet unopened  
So much to see,  
Drop some acid, man,  
Go see what you can find.

I never saw life as I know it, man,  
It was all in my mind.  
Things have become much clearer  
Now that I've opened up my mind.

Before all this, life was such a drag;  
Working on Chrysler's pressure line  
Just to pay for a shag.  
Working on the track  
Just to score some bread  
So I and the wife and kids  
Could be fed and comfy  
In our suburban shack.

But all that's gone now  
Since I've seen life for the first time  
Through the channels of my mind.

Acid was the key, it turned me on  
And helped me to find  
The right channels in my mind.

'(Anonymous—Found in a book in cell-block beneath Bristol Central Prison)

Returning to America after an absence of nearly four years was much more than a sentimental journey, much more than just filling in time; I was a man trying to maintain his soul alive. Keep the candle flame ablaze.... When all was growing dark. It was the wriggling to avoid death, essentially a poetic thing, undertaken without either rationality or reason. I wanted to probe something solid to live by. And travel was an available means to see, look, find—'*la vraie vie*'.

My internal space had changed since Millbrook and our first brief experiment in 'transpersonative living', when acid was the lance with which to ride after the Grail. There was now (1968) little good acid around, and what there was—the so-called 'street acid'—came mainly from California. There was something wrong with the synthesis; it was not pure. And you were never sure what it was exactly that you were taking, so I only dropped it on those rare occasions when someone gave me either 'Sandoz acid' or 'crystal acid'. I think the problem for the underground chemists manufacturing clandestine acid was shortage of ergot, without which the synthesis of d-LSD-25 is impossible. Until 1965, supplies of ergot could be bought with little or no difficulty from three or four European chemical companies; but pressure from Washington put a stop to this, doubtlessly hopeful that this would lead to an end of clandestine LSD. In one sense the Federal authorities were right. The underground ceased turning out d-LSD-25; instead, they discovered a wholly synthetic substance, akin to d-LSD-25 in so far as it produced marked change in consciousness. But the new synthetic acid lacked, in my opinion, that invisible non-pharmacological factor—the magical, spiritual component that was really what acid was all about. Sure, the new stuff 'worked' in the sense that any mind-altering chemical 'works' to produce subjective effects within the body, but it didn't seem to produce in those who used it any particularly noticeable elevation of either head or heart; at least, that was the conclusion I had reached in London. But it was—and probably still is—an unpopular view amongst the 'cognoscenti', who claim that some of the street acid is capable of producing positive subjective effects of a 'long-lasting nature', though they readily admit that a lot of the stuff sold as 'pure acid' is actually methylamphetamine (a concentrated form of amphetamine, first developed by the U.S. Army) or a stripped-down ergotamine compound by modern molecular chemistry.

My evaluation had nothing to do with the notion that a wholly synthetic drug produced a wholly synthetic experience—the intellectual response—but was based on direct, first hand experience (about thirty trips with street acid in all). And in each session I felt there was something it lacked—it was too 'electric', too 'speedy' and too 'mind-shattering'. The earlier clarity of 'insight' which I had obtained via the Sandoz acid was replaced by confusion, brokenness, words and worlds thrown into absolute dismemberment or even, absolute chaos, though, I must add, often coupled with a feeling that I can only describe as 'sublime inflation', a superabundance of emotive energy; but it could not signify; more a passionate flame and less the life-giving sun, as it were. I have read that d-LSD-25 is a semi-synthetic substance, of which ergot is the organic, i.e. 'living' part. And to say that the 'spiritual' component is contained within the ergot molecules must sound like a superstition to some, but what I intend here is to suggest that 'pure' acid has 'metapolitical' implications—there is a hidden truth or statement in each acid session which is unaccountably missing in most of my experiences using the clandestine stuff, Owsley and 'white-lightning' notwithstanding. There is, it seems to me, a qualitative decline in the subjective acid experience which is something that does not admit of scientific analysis; it is an intuitive thing I'd say. At any rate, I personally observed a voluntary moratorium during this period and would take nothing until I knew the exact chemical synthesis and where it was made and by whom. Besides, there was little or no shortage of good marijuana or hashish, our so-called 'mild psychedelics'.

A psychedelic is the solvent which dissolves the vigorous stereotypes of egocentric behaviour—it transforms the familiar self without changing a thing; it expands the moment: yet there isn't anything we can count on or accumulate; its value is poetic—it helps ferry us across the

abyss and we may thus gain a new amplitude; it is not a 'psychological' experience but a poetic one. It is best of course to undergo such metamorphosis by means of tuning in to nature, though it is only the very rarest of Westerners who can do this; we seem unable to develop our own power of concentration sufficiently to live consciously and continuously in our deepest self. We cannot become more than we are. It may be that we cannot even become what we are—'there is only becoming' e.e. cummings says; for us, then, Being is becoming; yet it remains possibility only, never achievement. It is all a matter of recognition; we must become capable of visualising ideas in order to live at the very heart of our being. It is all so simple that any child could do it (if only we don't try to explain). Or: only a child can do it.

Cambridge, Mass., is the home of both Harvard College and M.I.T. and stands across from the city of Boston, separated by the River Charles, about thirty minutes by taxi from Logan airport. It was snowing when I reached Gunther's house in Mount Auburn Street; the town was as if deserted by man. The gigantic apartment block on the opposite side of the street towered up from a snowy wasteland, surrounded by a few straggling trees. Every now and again one saw the lights of a car slowly moving along the driveway flanking the river; visibility was soon almost reduced to nil. The lady taxi-driver swore as I paid the fare, wishing she'd stayed in Boston. Then she propositioned me. 'We could get to know each other in the parking lot,' she added, waving to the back seat. 'There's not much else to do on a night like this.' I said I was bushed after the long flight from London but this only seemed to add spice to her game. 'I've only made it with one English guy before, and he was the best ball I've ever had, though a fucking bastard otherwise,' she added. Why not? She was pretty, in her late twenties. 'Okay. Let's get to the parking lot,' I said. 'Crazy! But in case you're kinky or something, you know, want to cut off my tits or anything, Jack-the-Ripper style, I'll blow your brains out with this.' And reaching inside the glove compartment she suddenly produced an enormous revolver. 'Protection, you understand. If you want to live in Boston, baby, you've gotta have a piece. Bam! Get it?' 'Are those things legal here?' I asked, seemingly dumb. 'Legal, regal; the fuzz ain't gonna bust ya for a piece, though they get pretty rough if you kill someone. No, it's protection.' 'But what if everyone carried a gun, then what...?' 'Then you'd be stupid not to, right? Anyway, I was only kidding. It ain't got no bullets in the chamber, maybe just two or three. I use it to scare drunks who get fresh.'

I was in the right mood when, a couple of hours and several drinks later, I rang Gunther's doorbell. I had called Gunther from the airport but the baby-sitter said he was at the Gurdjieff centre and wouldn't be back much before midnight—(a well-observed ritual vouches for the truly human and therefore natural sequence of human behaviours; if the meeting which a person needs is missed, then the psyche feels cheated, and a sense of loss and remorse or worse is bound to follow. Gunther believed in the ritual attendance of the Gurdjieff meetings; he didn't necessarily believe in Gurdjieff rituals, which, so far as one can understand them at all, seem to depend on the presence of the Master himself, but the weekly thing was important for the harmonious function of his creativity.)

But Gunther was back, and we greeted each other warmly with hugs and smiles and 'Wow-it's-great-to-see-you' stuff. Yes, it really did feel good to be back; (almost) as though I'd never been away. We spent the first few hours rapping, filling in the blanks, trying to find out what had happened to us both across the random and haphazard years since Harvard and Millbrook. For myself change, unceasing change, as though change was the only constant in my life. And Gunther? He was now teaching at Boston College. 'A bit ironic, really, a Jew teaching at a *Jesuit* establishment', working as a consultant with a New York media company, 'They sent me to India recently to tape some Indian music for a record', and running the Boston Gurdjieff Centre. 'Man, that cat knew more about human psychology than anyone I've come across before. I really dig his work.'

I then discovered that quite a number of the old Harvard psychedelic class of 1961-62 now worked for the Harvard Corporation—George Litwin was a professor at the Harvard Business School, Al Alschuler lectured at the Harvard School of Education, Dave Kolb was an instructor at M.I.T. and Huston Smith was still professor of religious philosophy (M.I.T.), Dave Katz was teaching at Boston's Brandeis University, Walter Clark was a professor of the psychology of

religion at Tufts University and had helped start the Cambridge Neurobiological and Psychedelic Study Group (together with Clemens E. Benda M.D., and the late Max Rinkel M.D.).

Obviously, the medicine of hallucination and the wonders of indiscipline had lost their appeal—everybody wanted to forget the 'Harvard Drug Scandal'.

'It all seems so ordinary now.' Gunther was almost apologetic when he spoke about former times. 'People turn on differently nowadays, you know, *sans drugs, sans trips*. Not Young-Man-Left-to Old-Man-Right but evolution of sensibility. Today people dig astrology, Meher Baba, the Tarot, the I Ching, Gurdjieff, macrobiotic food, yogas, even plain work....' Sure enough, when I did the telephone rounds the next morning, everyone was into their own 'non-drug' thing. It was as if Tim Leary and the Harvard Psychedelic Project had never existed—Al Cohen hadn't taken acid for over four years and now busied himself as head of the American Meher Baba Group. 'I dropped acid for three years, and it took me three years to transcend acid. Now I don't even think about it. Of Acid, the Avatar had this to say: "It doesn't bring you closer to God, for I am God and I tell you it takes you further away from Me".' Rolf von Eckartsberg, who used to co-edit *The Psychedelic Review* was a psychology professor at the University of Pennsylvania and was running a 'global village' project in Pittsburg; Paul Lee, also a former co-editor of *The Psychedelic Review* was teaching humanities and religion at the University of California in Santa Cruz; Stanley Krippner was the director of The Dream Laboratory at the Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn; Frank Barron was a professor at Berkeley and the author of 'Creativity and Psychological Health'; Joe Havens was also still lecturing and writing papers on the theme 'Religion Ponders Science'; and Richard Alpert was in India with his Hindu Guru, Neem Karolli Baba, or simply 'Maharaj-ji' as he is usually called, who told him, *à propos* LSD, 'In a quiet place where it is cool and you are feeling much peace, taken alone, it can bring you into the presence of Christ to do *pranams*. But you can only stay a few hours and then must leave. Better by far to become Christ. For that, Love is the best medicine, better than LSD. LSD is not the true *Samadhi*. These medicines were known about in the Kulu Valley, but now that knowledge is lost.'

It felt almost obscene to mention this three-letter word under the circumstances and I began to wonder whether I had got things cocked or somehow not quite right. I was frequently asked the same question: 'Do you still take acid?' which always contained a definite, if unspoken clause—after what happened in Manhattan's Lower East Side and the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco, after reports of people jumping out of windows or staring at the sun until they were blind, can the psychedelic experience still claim to a place in the New Age? Did Leary do for LSD as the liberal-humanist did for stereotaxic surgery (leucotomy), (which is the selective destruction of brain tissue—'Law'n Order surgery') and its claim as a therapeutic adjunct to mental anguish?

Not a few thinkers have thought so. During the years following the Leary-Alpert firings many attacks against non-prescriptive drug usage have appeared in the mass media. The corruption of the original mystical insights reported in the early (1960-63) literature has led to the corruption of popular opinion, who now view the psychedelic experience as a subject too complex, too weird to be discussed in a rational way. The mystic with the gift of the third eye expected to proclaim the reign of the happily integrated modern soul but instead he had found himself considered something of an oddball, and a resented one at that. Now he sits in solitary exile or behind the bars of the lunatic asylum whilst the village idiot walks Times Square with a gun in each hand.

'Do you still take acid? Does Leary still proselytise for LSD, trip out for days?' our visitor asks, as one may also be supposed to know about heroin, cocaine, speed, glue-sniffing and nitrous oxide. 'Mass-mysticism is poetry, an open secret—the message is in the seed.' As ancient Zen might have had it—'Take LSD for ten years, become LSD, and then forget about it'. The power of Zen—there is nothing to hold on to; the power of the aphorism. In his Frederick William Atherton lecture (Harvard University, 1967), Norman O. Brown reminds us that

'Aphorism is instant dialectic  
the instantaneous flip instead of the elaborate system...  
And so perishable

that it cannot be hoarded by any elite  
or stored in any institution.'  
'Aphorism: the word smells of literary self-consciousness the  
reality is brokenness  
words in absolute dismemberment  
or even, absolute self-contradiction.'

Like the historical Oxford Movement the Psychedelic Movement is a Western response to the pathogenic signs of our inner disruption, and is recognised as such by the New Radicals and by a tiny circle of metaphysicians in both the West and the East, just as the revolutionary anarchist movement was a century ago. For LSD is anarchistic, it shatters our complacency, explodes our stereotypes of ideology and dogmas, wakes, shakes, and makes the inner sleeping man from the somnambulist gravity of rectitude or righteousness. It is the madness that revels in the categories of being in which not one member is sober.

Madness need not necessarily be a cause for gloom—our greatest blessing, says Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, come to us by way of madness—provided; and the madness comes from God, he adds, someone like the God Dionysus or the spirit Mercurius or Siva, a condition which cannot be programmed, something whose truth lies beyond all power of words. Yet smile at our sad impasse. We cannot simply let ourselves go. 'I am fully aware of this,' Ionesco says, 'teach me how to untie the knots. I know I ought to undo them on my own and that this is a task everyone must carry out for himself, but at least give me a little guidance, so that I can see how the bonds I cannot loosen are tied.' But no help is forthcoming. The only reality is the truth of our own contradictory nature; truth is simply a more efficient form of fiction, Maya like everything else.

Can anyone teach Ionesco to untie the knots? 'The principal instrument of monopoly and control that prevents expansion of consciousness is the word lines controlling thought, feeling and apparent sensory impressions of the human host,' says Burroughs, but he makes a common error for he fails to distinguish the word from the experience. Another answer: according to Joey Mellen and Bart Hughes, is that it is man's rigid cranium that prevents him from expanding his consciousness, not his words...

'When the skull seals the tide of brainbloodvolume is  
out on the beach the adult dangles from the gallows—  
around his neck a chain of word associations—  
suspended on his own sentence  
the adult passes judgement on his children—  
his children—if they've any sense—pay no attention  
but bounce about  
on a cushion of intra-cranial pressure  
until their skull seals.... '

Ionesco, the new message is: 'If you want to get ahead get a hole in your head.' Perhaps the advantage is with Tibet where prayer wheels are another way of arriving at the same result—an egoless involvement with the abyss inside the self—any fool can do it: the mechanism is external while the mind is left vacant; and vacancy is not the worst condition of the mind; the ego, being non-existent, does not have to store, retrieve, catalogue, analyse or identify. But perhaps the last word can be left to Norman O. Brown, speaking of the place (and need) for the 'transforming spirit of play' and of that great revolutionary intellectual of the twentieth century, James Joyce:

'who reduced all that solemn nonsense to nonsense leading us in the path to which Wittgenstein directed us from disguised nonsense to patent nonsense a transition that is accomplished not by linguistic analysis but by poetry.'

Leafless trees, the cold, clear air of winter; wide, snow-covered streets on which students

wander about, whose physical appearance is different from when I was last here. Odd, really, how quickly the young respond to change. Whilst only seven or eight years ago the style was teeth-and-tweeds, button-down shirts and college ties, the mode of dress now veered on the far side of informality—jeans, denim shirts, cowboy boots and Afghan coats; and beards and long hair were everywhere prevalent. It was as if one psychic atmosphere had spread from California to Italy. Millions of similar people everywhere in the West. And their lifestyle was loose, unstructured; they seemed to roll on like the waves, whose movement is regulated by invisible forces emanating from the moon. They were beings who were in possession of a secret which provided the impetus to their lives; their aims were more inward; they had a feeling for values; they had achieved a certain level of consciousness. Were they not somehow more open than in any age previously, which gave them this new amplitude and a sense of purpose? And if you were to ask them, 'What for the future?' it is to themselves they would point. What folly to believe in a Providence which guides life from the outside! This is the change in itself. Where growth is guided by conscious volition, development of the personality takes place; everyone progresses, marches onward, further and further, and no end is in sight. Here was a new generation for whom time is real before eternity.

How good for the mental health of modern youth to imbibe a little Eastern wisdom. Everybody who believes in himself, no matter who he is, stands on a higher level than the timorous—yes, the formative power of the Brahmanic and Buddhistic, but also the Islamic East, can help us achieve the ideal of universal brotherhood, whereas the received teachings of the West fail in spite of their ideals. For whatever power the spiritual message has exerted over the minds of men has surely come from the unique degree of involvement which it posits between the divine and the here and now.

As I wandered the Cambridge streets, I thought of my earlier days of largely harum-scarum activity and what had happened to us all across these random and haphazard years of pilgrimage. And sometimes, when I am in a reflective mood, I wonder if there is a secret connection between spiritual necessity and empirical accident? How is it that this strange drug LSD had such immense consequences, and was discovered seemingly by accident alone? For the revolution in sensibility produced results which the LSD-users did not—and perhaps could not—foresee. But this is true for all revolutionaries—revolutions have to be considered as very complex series of actions initiated in highly particular circumstances and at particular points in time. 'Each age gets the revolution it deserves', is perhaps a truism, yet it is in fact that a small change of empirical circumstances, and the psychedelic revolution would not be the widespread manifestation which it is. It was now possible to see that an acceleration in our brief new renaissance had turned the Leary-Alpert streams into a river and that the whole movement, first of Harvard 1960-61, then of the International Federation for Internal Freedom in 1963-64 and the Castalia Foundation of 1964-67 and the League for Spiritual Discovery of 1966-68, etc., etc., was the result of a series of accidental circumstances in which groups of LSD-users discovered a peculiar disposition in their thought which allowed them to transform a triviality into a profound spiritual belief and allowed them to appreciate individual human existence as the living expression of metaphysical reality, because the psychedelic experience signified the reality and the beauty of the flower of the spirit. And thus the Age of the Flower Children was born out of the individual experience of transcendence, just as, in an earlier age, the Vedic *Soma* brought the light of consciousness into the world. What is the significance of the psychedelic movement? I do not know myself. I have struggled with the problem for years. But the facts are beyond question: the psychedelic renaissance, like all great periods of culture, cannot be explained altogether out of a demonstrable series of causes. If anything, they seem to owe their existence ultimately to a spiritual influx which bears the unmistakeable stamp of divine grace, something given rather than made. And once the source of inspiration has dried up, no effort and no talent is of any avail. Further, since the height of the psychedelic impetus, the insights have declined, in spite of all the psychedelic sessions which have occurred through these years, and today the LSD-user probably possesses less creative taste than any educated non-user, although they are still spiritually the most developed. What does this signify?—I

know only that LSD has decorated the world of ideas. In what then lies LSD's unique quality, its appeal for the person who takes it? Perhaps it is the discovery of the existence of shades of inner meaning one would not normally credit with the capacity for signifying so much.

Let us transpose ever so slightly the elements of visionary knowledge, or change the varieties of the spiritual, or use a different method for gaining deeper insights; or place the individual, as he is, into another setting which is subject to different environmental conditions, such as, for instance, a damp, ill-lit and unheated cave somewhere high in the Himalayas: it would be the revelatory 'mystical' experience no longer. I have seen such non-drug revelatory methods for getting westerners 'high' not fifty miles from Kathmandu: they lack the crystal-like clarity or immediacy of the psychedelic experience. The psychedelic experience makes particularly clear what the nature of individuality really is. It must seem a pity to some that anything could be metaphysically real which is manifestly so dependent upon empirical circumstances, in this instance, upon a psychedelic drug. It illustrates, on the other hand, that the spiritual component in man can only become visible subject to special empiric conditions. It doesn't solve the riddle of man's spiritual nature, nor is it a key to a metaphysics of ecstasy (as some thinkers have claimed); no matter how many causes and relations we establish: the essential escapes us. This says little in favour of those who incline to the belief that the LSD-user may thus far participate of metaphysical reality. But the visionary experience is essentially brief; once achieved and expressed, it becomes subject, like everything else, to the merciless downward pull of gravity and the world of three dimensions, that non-miraculous world of appearances we call either prison or home, which is manifest everywhere around me even now as I type these lines.

But reality must still count for something, and this is perhaps more true in America (than in any other country I've ever lived in), where prosperity is regarded as normal; he who simply contents himself, i.e. turns himself on, is regarded as feeble. The idea that divine blessedness and prosperity are connected is still effective today: the man who discovers Christ within him will become rich, healthy, an accomplished individual in this lifetime; it is a religious belief that teaches the possibility of uniting one's struggle for the goods of this world with ideal aspirations. The man who is pleasing to God must become rich; the fruits, which hitherto have fallen only to the lot of him who renounces the world, can now be shared by him who affirms it. This is the teaching of 'a religion of democracy'; the materialism of our era is Hallowed in Thy name...

I am constantly relapsing into didactics, though no teacher I; on the contrary, I discourage any kind of followership, since my capacity for head-work is limited. I am also without the necessary information. So I drift; I am that aimless drifting man who, setting out in the first light of dawn like a ship to sea, never knows when or with what cargo he will return to port; and to invite anyone to follow me on such a reckless enterprise would be akin to negligence, if not actually actionable. One has a few friends, and of course they help sustain one through periods of change or difficulty, but in the final analysis, one must chart one's own drift course through the peculiarities of our modern kind of existence. It is a situation I once discussed with Tim Leary—who confided in me his own strategies as a mentor of modern youth, which again confirmed my belief that he is one of the wisest, most illuminatory beings that the world has ever known.... The main theme of his philosophy, which he has dealt with in his book, *The Politics of Ecstasy* is the 'seven levels of consciousness—*solar, cellular, somatic, sensual, symbolic, stupor* (emotions) and *sleep*', what he calls 'the seven tongues of God'; 'seven dialects of energy, each triggered by the appropriate chemical—*LSD, mescaline, hashish, grass, stimulants, booze, narcotics*'.

Leary's message is that we die, creatively speaking, when we cling too fast to the definite, and that beyond the falsifications of egocentric consciousness lies the world of awareness which we must locate, pry out and finally weld to our being and in this way achieve affirmation of God, the world and the other people in it.

'The yoga of drugs is of course a key method. The sexual yoga is also key—access



to and control of sexual energy. Nothing can be renounced. All is God. Every energy is divine. All must be understood and controlled for *spiritual purposes*, including the yoga of power. All energy is available to him who accepts the basic energy formula; all energy is available to him who knows that it must not be grabbed, held, possessed or used for any other purpose except spiritual.' (Private correspondence.)

It is a beautiful message and one that could become a proper matter of concern for a generation raised on Marx, Dulles, Thieuing gum and Coca-Cola. It is thus not without precedent that Leary, like Socrates before him, should be convicted by his peers of corrupting a nation's youth, for history, like the big wheel in a cosmic funfair, spins slowly towards the final revolution... and mankind has not progressed even one iota. And, most tragic of all, the protoplasm seems happy.

Seeing how many of the original Harvard Psychedelic Project were working for the Corporation, it was not too difficult to persuade the university to have me back, this time, however, not as a four-hours-a-week instructor to third-year graduate students in psychology but as a trainee librarian at the Harvard University Library. The plan was that I should work as an assistant curator of Scandinavian Aquisitions, attend a two-year course in Library Science at Boston's Sammer's college, and then stay on as a full librarian, with faculty privileges; and perhaps teach one course after this probationary period. The authorities were nervous, perhaps understandably, but in their own way showed a remarkably liberal, open-minded attitude about having me back.

The first few weeks were spent learning how books were indexed and catalogued and how to find my way around the 'stacks' underneath the main library building, which is an art in itself, for the Harvard Library (second only to the Library of Congress in Washington) had been assembled through the years with stolid incompetence, and I dare say that no one is entirely sure where all the books are. Certainly in my section, the Scandinavian language collections were catalogued in such a manner that it could sometimes take a whole day to locate a particular book, even for an experienced librarian. The reason given for this odd state of affairs was that until quite recently the Curators were usually eccentrics and not infrequently quite possessive about 'their' books, often devising an elaborate personal coding system to stop students borrowing them; that is, unless you asked the Curator himself to locate the particular book for you. But times and people change. A new breed was taking over, as it were; soon only *professional* librarians would be in charge. No more muddling through. Efficiency was now the touchstone by which a librarian was to be judged. The library did not offer a complete life, as enclosed and dedicated as a monastery, but a career, like any other. Certainly, it *helped* if you had a taste for books or reading, but the main thing was knowing how to catalogue the stuff. It was even envisaged that, in time, the entire library would be computerised, though plans for this innovation had met with little response from the higher 'invisible' echelons who contemplated such suggestions in the cloistered calm of their private rooms. I was told about one Curator, in charge of Burmese Acquisitions, I think, who had been dead in his private room for nearly two months, and was only discovered when a student, due to some error in his walk, had accidentally opened the door and saw this decomposing figure huddled in a huge leather armchair. The story goes that the student, far from being surprised at the condition of the old man, actually asked him for directions to the Poetry Room.

The work was interesting enough, however, and I suppose I could have stuck it out through the two-year training period, but something happened to change my direction. Gunther and some other friends had obtained space in a huge loft-like building in Nutting Road near Harvard Square. It was called the 'Cambridge Readeasy'—a sort of free university-cum-workshop in 'Communication, Creativity and Awareness'. And they invited me to run a poetry workshop involving poets and students in the greater Boston area. This was fine as far as I was concerned for it gave a focus to my life and an excuse to meet and hear some of the younger poets, who I encouraged to drop around and take part in the experiment.

The Readeasy soon became quite popular with the local Underground, who kept us all well-supplied with grass and the occasional pipe of opium. But this was not the reason why I left Cambridge (in fact, it was probably the high quality of the grass that was keeping me there), but the arrival of Leary for a lecture series in Boston, when we met and he invited me to join him in Berkeley. I was a bit hesitant at first, perhaps because I felt more at home on the East Coast, but my curiosity got the better of me, and a few weeks later I resigned from the library and was jetting across America to San Francisco, where Tim picked me up at the airport; and the start of a new adventure.

California—land of the Brave or land of the Freaks? Tim had no doubts in his mind:

'California is at least one year ahead of the East Coast in Aquarian life-styles, sophistication, and enterprise. Here is where it is all happening.' I said the weather was nice. 'Yeah; warm, sunny and soft, just like a beautiful woman.'

Soon we were in the city and Tim said he'd give me a tour, starting on Fisherman's Wharf and home of some of the best seafood restaurants in America. From there we drove along Chinatown's Pacific Avenue and Grant Avenue, where the sole business seemed to be food. Chinese variety shops ran like a strip of tinsel through the heart of the city. From there we drove up to Nob Hill, home of the rich and the elegant, where tradition is slow to change and the residents carefully preserve an air of bygone days while sparing no modern convenience. Then back to Market Street where we dropped by a couple of bars before going on to the Haight and a Japanese restaurant for lunch.

Then in the afternoon we visited Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panthers, a very impressive personality who was in the middle of his campaign to become the first coloured president of the United States. Basically, the line he presented was something like this: 'When you vote for me you are voting for this finger'. He would then hold up the index finger of his right hand. 'This finger. Because this finger is the finger that presses the button. And, man this finger ain't *never* going to push any button. Do you trust Nixon's finger anywhere *near* that red button? I don't. So when you vote, remember, you're voting for the finger that won't push the button', etc., etc. He'd been out campaigning most of the morning and seemed a bit tired when we met him, but he welcomed Tim warmly, like an old friend, joking and fooling, and every now and again telling Tim that the Black Panther Party was really getting it together. A very remarkable man, I thought.

And on to Menlo Park just south of the city to meet Ken Kesey, who I remembered from the early Harvard days, when he was then known as the author of *One Flew the Cuckoo's Nest*, a brilliant novel about the goings-on inside a mental hospital. Now he was into his political bag, and had hopes of uniting the various hippie factions in the Bay Area into a coordinated party, something similar to the Panther organisation, but looser, without too many rules. Tim said that he was considering running against Reagan as Governor of California: 'I'd strip the cops of their guns, double their salaries and encourage them to smoke dope. I'd also introduce a "marijuana tax"—like the annual automobile tax, only much higher, say, one thousand bucks a year. And then I'd distribute the revenue amongst the Californian middle-class. In that way, everyone would be happy.' There were immediate and voluble objections from Ken and the others in the apartment, 'Man, one thousand bucks to smoke weed? You'd never get any of the heads to vote for that. Fifty bucks, maybe. But one thousand... man, do you know how much weed you could buy for that? Enough to keep you stoned for months. Better think again "Uncle Tim" if you want to get my vote.'

An hour or so chewing the breeze, and back to San Francisco again, to a small building across from the Panhandle Park where 'The Messiah' lived with his commune of followers, and the headquarters of 'The Messiah's World Dope Crusade'. There was no reply when we knocked on the door, but it wasn't locked so we walked in. The house was silent. Tim then opened one of the doors leading into a huge living-room where a group of perhaps six beautiful girls were seated in a circle on the floor holding hands. They all seemed to be crying. No one looked up as we entered, and Tim immediately put on a serious expression and quietly joined this tearful circle.

After a few minutes had passed, Tim asked after The Messiah.

'He was busted this morning. The fuzz came round and busted him for ten keys

(kilograms) of grass. Man, like we needed to raise bread on that for our new macro bakery.'

'Where is The Messiah now?' Tim gently asked.

'Down at the Precinct, I guess. They said they'd been watching him for weeks and that this time he'd go down for a long time.'

'Why didn't he pay them off?'

'Cos we'd spent all our bread on this new consignment and only had a couple of hundred bucks or so in the house.'

'Is there anything I can do?'

'Just pray. That's what we're doing.'

On the way to Berkeley mention of the raid was made on the FM news. It seemed that The Messiah had told the desk sergeant that unless he was released that afternoon he'd have to take 'drastic action'. He was reported as saying that he'd use his telepathic powers to cause a two-hour traffic jam on the Bay Bridge during the evening traffic rush. He was released on a nominal bail, a few hours later.

Soon we were in Berkeley and Tim's house in Queen's Road, high in the hills overlooking the campus and the Bay. We made it just before the curfew—the Free Speech Movement was rioting against the Vietnam war. There had been campus revolts every day for a week, and the police had introduced a curfew after nightfall.

Tim used to refer to his house as 'The Embassy'. There was a constant stream of visitors of all shapes, shades and sizes, each one involved at some level with the revolutionary Underground. And they would make their reports to Tim who'd then comment or make suggestions or give them some LSD. I was thus able to get a picture very quickly of what was happening in California, mainly talk actually, though sometimes you'd meet a veteran of some campus riot or other. I think the only really sensible and coherent person in the area was Jerry Garcia of 'The Grateful Dead'. 'Acid,' he used to say, 'has changed consciousness entirely. The US has changed in the last few years and it's because that whole first psychedelic thing meant "here's this new consciousness, this new freedom, and it's here in yourself".' He was later to develop his thesis in a *Melody Maker* interview...

'I think we're beginning to develop new capacities just in order to be able to save the world from our trips—you know, pollution, etc.—if for nothing else. Just for survival. The biological news is that in 100 years from now life on earth is finished, so what has to happen is this organism has to adapt real quick and develop new capacities to stem this flow, to maybe head it off somehow. In this scheme of things, politics and all those things belong to the past. They're meaningless, going down the drain.'

After a couple of months in Berkeley, we moved to Southern California, to a ranch in Idyllwild near the San Bernardino Forest and the headquarters of the Brotherhood of Eternal Love, a former Los Angeles motor-cycle gang who had taken acid and dropped out of crime and into dope-dealing. And Tim it was who had become their leader/guru/teacher. The ranch was sited a couple of miles along a dirt road off the Palms-to-Pines Highway; the hills at the back overlooked Palm Springs and the desert. It was a beautiful place, and there were some thirty of us living there. Tim lived in a small bungalow with his wife, Rosemary, while I had a room in a smaller building adjacent. The Brothers either lived in the ranch house or in small outbuildings.

The ranch hadn't been lived in for over a year, so there was a lot of work to be done. For my part, I built a sauna hut, utilising a couple of old stoves for the purpose and insulating the walls with sand. There was room inside for perhaps half a dozen people, and we'd often retire there in the evenings with a couple of cherry pipes filled with hashish, and sweat and smoke until we'd either pass out or freak out in the heat. I also worked the huge caterpillar bulldozer in an attempt to smooth out some of the bumps in the earth road leading to the ranch, but it kept breaking down or, perhaps due to my inexperience with heavy-duty machinery, it would sometimes swivel off the road and into the ditch and it could take all of us a whole day to get it back on the road again.

The summer passed gloriously, and apart from the occasional police helicopter hovering overhead, we were not troubled much by contact with the outside world. There was also a lot of good acid available, and we would celebrate each Full Moon in the mountains, when the sessions would be run along the lines of the Indian Peyote ceremonies—that is, we'd all be seated in a circle around a blazing fire chanting or shaking an Indian rattle to ward off evil spirits. There would also be drums and guitars, and sometimes one of the Brothers would dance around the fire shouting incoherently as though touched with the 'gift of tongues', though you'd hardly call us Pentecostal. We also tried to communicate with flying-saucers of which many had been reported in the skies above the ranch.

However, by the Fall, I was again restless, this time for a more solitary refuge, somewhere where I could simply be, and preferably alone. I had met too many people in California, heard too many things, maybe even taken too much acid. Now I wanted out. And it was thus to Tonga in the South Pacific that I went...

Nine hours after leaving San Francisco, I caught my first glimpse of the tropical islands of the South Pacific as we flew low over Fiji. The richness of the landscape below was overwhelming everywhere. Perfect beauty abounded, in which meaning and expression are one. This peaceful island of lush jungle which blossoms like flowers was surrounded by dark green hills and encircled by a rich blue sea, as still and as peaceful as a lake. And then Tonga! This Other Eden of palm trees shooting upwards to the sky, rich, luxuriant, yellow beaches and an exquisitely blue sea lapping against the shores. When I stepped off the plane I was so thrilled that I immediately set off on a long walk, and when I returned, feeling weary, I thought, as I reclined in a comfortable wicker chair on the shaded balcony of my tiny hotel: thou art in paradise. Here should I be; and be free from myself.... And as I looked out across the garden over the tree tops, I saw hordes of monkeys who pursued, in a silent tight-rope dance, their fodder for the evening meal. How delightful it is to be in a world which was finally created on the fifth day! Here nothing has changed, here everything is simple and true. I was beginning to understand why most truly great minds prefer 'nature to human society'. The latter limits, the former liberates.

How harmonious the landscape in the light of the sunset. The sea reflects the last light of the sky. The screeching of the gulls high above the water and the shrill chirping of the cicadas fills my mind as no music ever could. In the narrow road opposite an old fisherman carries his nets; I can hear him singing to himself, softly, to the rhythm of the breaking waves. He is faithful to himself and to the spirit of nature; I could believe that this solitary wayfarer understands the doctrine of nirvana in the way in which an enlightened saint wishes to have it understood. Here there is no striving, for everything happens of its own accord. One's volition wanes irresistibly. I feel in this hothouse air it is futile to work, to wish, to strive; it is not I who think, but nature thinks in me, it is not I who wish, but something wishes in me. For this native fisherman, Buddha's doctrine of cognition is a matter of course, the result not of self-determination but of his own psychic process developing at one with nature; its truth is something which the most cultured Westerner only very exceptionally perceives. Here thought seems somehow superfluous; here nothingness is the background of semblance; the intellect turns away, as it were, from its possible content; it becomes more and more empty, till at last no thought remains. The mind is as bland and as blank as a bank of snow. Such simplicity of mind signifies a form of existence which proceeds without effort. And everything happens naturally, without conscious effort and without the direction of the will; indeed, in the tropics the will is so small that the wish fails to become father to the thought. Life is thus essentially a mindless involvement with nature, with mediocrity as the purest form of normality. Here it is possible to achieve everything by doing nothing.

Tonga itself is a collection of perhaps 150 small islands, mostly uninhabited. It is Blessed, for it was dedicated to Heaven at Pouono by King George Tupou, and there is a strong sense of the religious amongst its peoples, their faith is firmly rooted in the worship of Christ.

I spent the first week in Nukalofa, the capital, resembling in appearance a sort of shanty

town you normally associate with the ghetto districts of Georgia or Alabama—lots of corrugated iron and shed-like dwellings, semi-derelict store fronts and flaked woodwork, but still charming for all that. But I longed for isolation, for I was impatient of humankind and wanted to live in the jungle where the only sounds would be natural ones.

After consulting a map I decided upon Vava'u, a tiny speck of an island some 150 miles distant from the main island, and a two-day sail by steamer. I telephoned the Governor to ask his permission to stay on the island, explaining that I was a writer and needed the peace and quiet in order to write a book. He was most gracious and hospitable, and even offered to send his Land Rover to pick me up at the pier. Perfect. Now I could unwind; find there my final dwelling place, and forget all the despairs of consequence which had plagued my life in the West. Somehow, incredibly, I had escaped from the concrete jungles of London and New York and San Francisco, and in a tolerably good state. Now I could begin the slow work of salvage, become whole again, maybe even find that peace of head or heart I had sought through all these years of largely accidental activity. I had found an excuse for living. And I intended to plan my own death very, very, carefully, which alone can give the meaning to one's life.

Vava'u was all that I had anticipated; indeed more, since it manifested itself in the form of the most delicately sensuous natural beauty, especially in the morning, when the sea flows in golden waves towards the rising sun; the whole island seemed to be divinely transfused: one feels inclined, like the pilgrims on the Ganges, to sink down every morning before the beauty of the place in fervent gratitude.

You can imagine my surprise, therefore, when, on my second morning—I had rented a bamboo and thatched hut a couple of miles from the tiny port on the edge of the bush—I was awakened by the sound of pop music. Nothing could have been more incongruous or unexpected, and I feared at first it was an auditory hallucination. But the noise persisted, and, quickly dressing, I followed the sound into the bush until I came to a small hut. I knocked on the door. No answer. So I knocked again. This time a voice, an American, answered—'Who is it?' 'Friend,' I said. 'Enter, friend.'

I pushed open the door and inside were three young men dressed in jeans and sweat shirts. The air was redolent of marijuana, and everyone appeared to be pretty stoned. I said I'd heard the music and, curious, had followed the sound. Did they mind if I sat down and joined them? 'Nope.'

It turned out that they were members of the Peace Corps, of which there were about 120 scattered about the islands, seven of whom were on Vava'u. The Tongalese called them 'voluntary workers'. Some taught English in the schools, some worked as medical assistants for the Medical Department, and some were working as farmers. These three seemed a nice bunch of guys. And the ice was quickly broken when I told them I was writing a book about psychedelics. 'Did you bring any acid with you?' one of them asked. 'I did as a matter of fact—about 100 trips of "sunshine", which is about as pure as you can get. Have any of you taken acid?' None of them had, but each said he'd like to try some. 'How about some grass? Do you have any?' I asked. 'Sure,' one of them said passing me the plastic bag filled with marijuana. 'Roll yourself a joint. It's great weed. We grow it locally. It's dynamite.'

The effect was excellent, and soon I was as stoned as they were. Jefferson Airplane were playing on the Sony cassette, loud and energetic, playing tight and clean, blowing our minds. You didn't have to listen to it with great concentration. You can just sorta drift with it. Then followed some Grateful Dead—*Anthem Of the Sun* and *Aoxomoxoa*; very soulful and communicative, a liturgy of the hip. The music was creating good vibes all around, with everything becoming one music; or rather, everything inside becoming *all* music, which is what true pop music is all about, the obliteration of thought for sensation.

One of the Peace Corps guys was really uptight about a recent debate in the Parliament. Apparently, a member of the Tongan Parliament had complained that they were starting their own private businesses by growing small gardens, selling the produce, and feeding chickens so as to sell the eggs. He said they were trying to change Tongan customs.

'Here, let me read you some of what this cat said—"Our women who used to wear a

dress, the traditional *tupenu* and *ta'ovala* are now clothing themselves in one yard of cloth. Even the huge women use up only one yard, making it so tight that their sharp-shinned legs show and it makes them look thick on the right side and thin on the left." Crazy! Now dig this, "When they are walking in the streets, you can't tell if they are coming or going! This has come from the examples set by the voluntary workers. All the spiritual feelings I experience when I am in the church vanish when these voluntary workers enter the church building with the clothes they wear. Very often I feel like getting up and throwing them out. Therefore I ask the Premier that if a copra boat should come, let us pack them all in it and send them back to America. Soon they will be wearing only underwear to church." But he got no steam from the Premier, who also happens to be the king's brother, Prince Tu'ipelehake. He really took the wind out of the sails, telling this uptight cat, Tu'akoi' that instead of being critical he should be grateful.... "God made their visit possible. It is often a mystery that, without knowing or being acquainted with anyone, they are willing to sacrifice to give such help. The sacrifice and usefulness have been proved today not only to the Government, but also to the people, the country and the church. Love is repaid with love, and the understanding and the willingness to help is the most important of all. We should consider such gratitude and sacrifice. I believe that if they have sacrificed for Tonga, not one of us here in this house could do more for Tonga. We should be grateful and we have given an oath to be rightful and loving in our work for His Majesty King Tupou IV and the country".'

After a few days I had got to know the seven local Peace Corps quite well. We'd spend a lot of time rapping. And there was plenty of grass from their gardens. We also discussed having a 'sunshine' session together, on one of the small uninhabited islands close by. We settled on one weekend, and taking supplies of food and water for two days, we took the motor-boat to a small island of palm trees and golden beaches about three miles from port. I had previously explained at some length what sort of reaction to expect and how to overcome any paranoia by fixing the mind on a natural object like a stone or a coconut, or by chanting the 'Vajra Guru Mantra'—OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM—which represents the vital essence of the 84,000 sections of the Dharma, 'and in this way attain the *siddhis* of the wrathful deities'.

The session began shortly after we landed. It was a morning of bright golden sunlight and a clear blue sky and sea, no sound from anywhere; a perfect setting. Soon the 'sunshine' began to take effect, and again I was transported into the heart of my intra-atomic self, that place of reconciliation and bliss in which all life lives in the unity of the One. But I was unable to stay there for long; one of the group had begun to declare himself as Jesus Christ and insisted that we were his disciples. And the force of his conviction, coupled with an increased rapidity and volume of his speech, began to take over our heads so that soon we were lost in a maze of contradictory thoughts and feelings, expressed variously in anger, laughter, dismay and fear. In vain I tried to get him to keep quiet, but he continued to expatiate on the evil he saw in life and insisted that we follow him on a crusade to save the world. Very soon the harmony of the session was lost, and people either wandered off by themselves or sat as if transfixed by this Christ figure, submerged under the non-stop repetitious flow of words. As there was nothing now I could do to silence him, I too ambled off along the beach, just hopeful that our new Christ would talk himself into silence by the time I got back. OM AH HUM VAJRA GURU PADMA SIDDHI HUM I intoned as I slowly walked along the shoreline stopping every now and again to pick up a shell or observe the miracle of the sand turtle or the vigorous motion of tiny crabs....

When I got back several hours later, everyone was there and seated around a small fire. Jesus was curiously observing each face one after the other, as if seeking an answer to some private question, a sort of vacant look on his face, an expression of disbelief; but he was mercifully silent.

We slept on the beach that night, gazing at the million sparkling stars, thinking,

wondering, seeking answers to man's age-old question 'What is the secret of this universe in which we live?' until, exhausted, we finally fell asleep. We returned to Vava'u the next day. The boy Jesus seemed a little embarrassed by what he had said and done, but soon we had him laughing at his own stupidity. He later told me he had been a divinity school student for two years before switching to social science, but after this 'trip' he wondered that perhaps he ought to have stayed on and become a minister. I told him that he could be anything he wanted, this time around. Besides, he was probably serving God better by helping teach Tongans how to run their social services than preaching his word each Sunday in church. I gave him my copy of the New Jerusalem Bible.

But it was all too good to last. Already there was gossip on the main island about the Peace Corps growing pot on Vava'u, and now rumour had it that they were taking LSD. This was confirmed when I received a note from the British Consul saying that some questions were being asked about me and the purpose of my stay in Tonga. He was also in possession of a file from the Foreign Office, and the local CIA had filled in a few more details. Would I care to visit him to discuss the matter? It was exactly one month since I first arrived in Tonga when the Minister of Police and about a dozen detectives arrived on Vava'u and started searching for the marijuana beds. The Peace Corps were clearly implicated, and a cable was sent to Washington to this effect. By return came a cable from the Peace Corps Director asking that they return to Washington immediately, when there would be a hearing before the committee. As for myself, I decided to leave before I was kicked out, and soon I was on the jet, this time for New York, where at least it was still possible to smoke pot without getting paranoid, as now even office girls were smoking the stuff, which meant nearly everyone in the city was.

And the fellows from the Peace Corps? It seemed that they had not returned to Washington as instructed but had decided to live in Fiji instead, turning on the local Peace Corps, as well as their former colleagues on holiday from Tonga. Again and again I am surprised at the effect that LSD has on people's lives, how it seems to change their directions or goals, making it somehow impossible for them to exist in the formal, structured world so favoured by the Establishment. In this case what a few micrograms of LSD had done was to transform a bunch of ordinary, middle-class Americans with clear-cut expectations and achievement-motivations into missionaries of a new order, for they were now possessed of a self, or of a self-consciousness similar to that of the mystics, *rishis*, and saints. How was such a change accomplished? Only by the realisation of the God within, and by the willingness to accept the validity of this vision, and moreover by the ability to re-create this insight as immediately in terms of a living manifestation: they have made of themselves whatever art it is in the life of each one of them, unconcerned with the trappings of outer forms or appearances: they live according to an inner rhythm, not that of the metronome but of music. They had recognised the Atman within themselves, and now wanted to realise him in the world; they wanted to assist Brahma, whose partial expression they believed themselves to be.

## **10. The Capital of Kingdom Come**

**1969**

The anti-diluvian DC-9 swam through a sea of milk all the way from Delhi. It was only just before landing that the clouds cleared for an instant and I saw the magical city of Kathmandu cradled by the snowy ranges of the Himalaya—a non-euclidian landscape of terraced paddy fields surrounding a dream form of pagoda-like temples and golden palaces, rising into view and spinning from the horizon as the plane circled to land.

I was thirty-eight, on my first visit to Asia with New York left well behind, carrying a typewriter, some hand-baggage, a few hundred trips of Californian 'sunshine' acid which a friendly psychiatrist laid on me, and about \$1000 left from a colour video movie I made about tripping to the moon. It was July 16, 1969, and my pilgrimage was destined to begin at the precise moment of the Apollo 11 blast-off for man's first landing on the moon.

At a more ordinary level, it was, I gathered later, absolutely the wrong time to visit

Kathmandu, as the monsoon was imminent; the air was stifling with humidity and the bumpy taxi ride from the airport made me sick; and I longed for some air-cooled Manhattan bar where a couple of iced lagers could revive a sorely tried spirit. Whatever expectations of romance I had nursed had been shrivelled in the heat by the time I reached my hotel. I had the insane urge at this point to drive straight back to the airport and continue to Bangkok, settle down to a routine English-teaching job, get rid of my beard and long hair, become super-straight, like my friends Al Cohen and Richard Alpert, and maybe continue to Australia ... but as the beauty of the valley began to exercise its subtle magic through the windows of my room, I just knew that this was indeed the one place in or out of this world where I wanted to be. I took a bath, changed into a Tibetan shirt and Indian *dhoti*—a sort of bin cloth you wrap around yourself—smoked a couple of chillums of good Afghani dope; and nearly fainted in dream of dreams.

The view through my window was brilliant with the afternoon sun. Amazement was the first element of my muted delight at these bright green paddyfields between myself and the snowcapped ranges still visible through the shimmering heat; and mystery, of what lay beyond them, unseen—the distant half-chartered ranges of Tibet, home of the fable-seeking imagination. The spell of the Himalayas was upon me. The beauty of my surroundings began to penetrate a hardened carapace, for these mountains had begun to exercise a magic thralldom all their own. And now I was part of it. In some way which I could not rationally explain, I just knew that I was gazing at the mysterious container of the history of the world, the magical amphitheatre in which Siva dances with Nataraja. I was a visitor in the ancient land of gods and abode of *rhishis*, *tapaswis*, *sadhakars*, saints and philosophers who come to meditate in glacial deserts to make their beings as pure as the snow which covers the tops of their sacred mountains and their minds as clear and transparent as the water of the holy lakes... they offered their adherents a way of life, a path to happiness:

'In the body as it is in reality are contained all worlds, mountains, continents and seas, the sun and the other constellations... ' says the *Pretakalpa* of *Garuda-Purana*. I also had a sense of what was meant in the passage from the Hindu epic *Ramayana*: 'He who but thinks of the Himalayas does greater things than he who is destined to tarry in Benares'. And, by implication, he who tarries in Canterbury, Rome, Salt Lake City, Belfast, and Jerusalem. I realised with an immediacy akin if not identical with revelation that I had travelled halfway across the world to find in Kathmandu what I sought in vain throughout my wanderings in the West.

There were certain immediate needs, however, like scoring some local hashish, for which Nepal was rightly famed. And some more suitable clothes.

It was still early, and even if it was like a furnace outside, I decided to venture forth into the maze of dusty streets and alleyways, all somewhat reminiscent of the imaginary Baghdad of *The Arabian Nights*.

The city is not very large and within a matter of minutes I found myself in the central square. It was like something out of the Middle Ages, with street vendors sitting by their piles of cloth and vegetables and boxes of cheap ornamental beads, with enough activity going on to keep the eye fully occupied. A huge bull emerged suddenly from the crowd, sedate and reasonable, wandering with the scores of shoppers, even defecating without so much as a pause, unnoticed, except, that is, by myself. The houses were of red brick, all built in a strange pagoda style which eliminated straight lines, with latticed windows and overhanging balconies, many with hanging potted plants. There were temples and delicate *stupas*, huge sculptured statues, beautifully proportioned by some anonymous race of master artists. The faces of these deities seem self-absorbed in contemplation; sharp cheeks and supple chins in the case of the male gods, and sweetly smiling lips, sensitively sloping fleshy cheeks with elegant curves in the case of the females. Some of the faces had been almost worn away through the passage of time, which gave them a special mystery. Yet each one—and there were hundreds—was strangely complete in itself and fostered the message of the divine. But what was interesting was to see how they were still objects of veneration and worship by the people. There was one in particular that caught my eye, a sculpture of the god Vishnu, the divine ruler of the *Hindu Triad*; the face looked serious, with just the right degree of rectitude and probity as befitted his position. He had ear ornaments hanging above his shoulders and



had all the traditional attributes or *ayudas*—the crown, the necklace, the garland of flowers and the hip-belts, all exquisitely shaped; the upper garment, the sacred thread or *yajnopavita*, and the *dhoti* were emphasised with oblique lines through the chisel-marks. In front was a rounded platform, a stone, for rubbing and making *chandana* paste from sandalwood.

It was a glimpse of this Other World, of something that I had seen and read about but had never had direct experience of before. Here I could actually feel this something.

I still had to score some hash and get a Tibetan shirt or two and a *dhoti*. I also wanted to discard my shoes. I remembered that someone had told me that Rana's teashop was a good place to score so along I went. It was up a tiny alley, dustbin dirty and smelling of cow shit and urine. Outside sat a small boy, a beggar, and I gave him a handful of rupees before I went inside.

Rana's was an extraordinary place. There was pop music on twin speakers, very loud, and a few stone-topped tables at which were gathered a group of perhaps fifteen young Westerners, silent, smoking chillums, and oblivious. They were dressed in a gay medley of Indian, Tibetan and Nepalese costumes, bedecked with beads and beards. One of them looked up, smiled, and handed me a chillum, which I smoked. The effect was instantaneous—I almost passed out, and had to sit down.

I don't know how long I remained seated at the table, perhaps an hour, perhaps two. The hash was the strongest I'd ever had and completely immobilised me. Rana, the dapper young Nepalese owner of the place, would come over every now and then and ask if there was anything more I wanted. 'Tea?' or 'Porridge?' I merely shook my head and continued just sitting in my utter stupor.

Finally, I was able to stand up, and I indicated to Rana that I'd like to buy some of his hashish. He brought out a simple handheld set of scales and weighed a *to/a*—about one-third of an ounce—which cost me about four shillings. Then I split.

I was still in somewhat of a daze when I got back to my hotel, and had to lie down again. It was dark when I awakened. I decided to undress and go to bed. It was only eight o'clock, but there was really nothing I could or wanted to do. I was completely stoned.

I awoke at daybreak. The bright yellow sun flooded through my windows and I felt wonderful. Today would be a good day. And, as things turned out, it was.

I made a telephone call to the Royal Palace to talk to Narayan Shresther, private secretary to the Crown Prince, who I had known in Cambridge, Massachusetts, about one year ago. He seemed pleased to hear that I was in Kathmandu, and said he'd drop by the hotel to see me. Narayan dropped by for lunch. He showered me with smiles and greetings and love. And we had a great reunion, recalling our past meetings at Harvard and lots of questions about why I had come to Kathmandu. 'Why Kathmandu? Surely there must have been somewhere else?' was a characteristic question, for I'm sure his own dream fantasies of paradise cities were directed towards Paris or even San Francisco. I told him I'd come in order to sort out 'my priorities', to gain a new amplitude, to enjoy the experience of living in a foreign country, things like that. I told him that even in the short space of twenty-four hours I could not only see but actually *feel* that indigenous and elusive quality in Nepalese life. It was that quality, which hitherto I had only been told about but could never really experience, which indeed has yet to be expressed outside the occasional rare poem. He thought I should write a book about Nepal. Then we laughed.

During the lunch I brought up the matters of my visa. I had, I told him, about \$1000, and lots of enthusiasm about starting a poetry magazine in Kathmandu. I had even got the title—*Flow*. I reminded him that one of the things we had chatted about in America was the phenomenon of hippies and how I had taken him around the various colleges and to private homes so that he might better understand the new life-styles now emerging in America and in Europe—many tied into oriental religions. Narayan—who has a degree in English from Leeds University had been tutor to the Crown Prince (now King Birendra of Nepal), and I had been anxious for the Crown Prince to also appreciate that, if these developments were to continue, new possibilities for religious-minded Westerners would have to be developed in India and Nepal, the two Asian countries which had perhaps most to teach. Hippies were not long-haired layabouts in most instances, but had chosen to spend some time in the East living with and through the ordinary people, or in *Ashrams* or monasteries; they had come to learn, as

seekers, not as tourists with lots of dollars to spend. And I was one of them.

He said that he'd discuss the matter of my stay with the Crown Prince, and that I would be hearing from him the next day. He envisaged no difficulty. As it turned out, I received a year's visa, extendable at any time should I wish to stay on in Nepal. It was something I had cause to be very, very grateful for indeed, as visa formalities can and usually do involve a certain amount of hassle with the authorities, with something like six weeks considered to be about the average length of stay permitted at that time.

Narayan had a little Volkswagen and offered to drop me somewhere. I said I'd like to see one of the museums, so he drove me a mile or two outside the city to the National Museum near SwayambhuNath, one of the Holy Buddhist Centres of Nepal. He himself had to get back to the Palace. He had given up his job as English Lecturer at Tribhuvan University and was now private secretary to the Crown Prince—which meant he had to work that much harder!

The exterior of the museum was in the traditional Nepalese style of architecture and beautifully preserved. And as I walked around inside, gazing at the sculptured Hindu Gods, the bronze figures of the Goddess Curga, prayer necklaces of *Rudraksa* beads, incense burners shaped as the tree of life, and paintings, I was glimpsing into a past that was still very much a living present, for here was a highly developed, sophisticated art tradition that had reached perfection when Nepal had been the flower of a great Asian civilisation. I looked at the statue of Vishnu, this one dating from the fifteenth or sixteenth century—it was very massive and majestic, standing completely erect on a bold-relief lotus-flower, and flanked on either side by his two female consorts. The female deity at his right hand held a chakra or 'fly-whisk' (I suppose that even the most powerful of Gods were not totally immune to the ubiquitous valley mosquito) and a lotus flower. The female at his left carried a lyre in her hands pressed closely against the breasts and the belly. But the real beauty was in the faces and forms of Vishnu's consorts—their slender waists and exceptionally beautiful and delicate breasts conveyed their profound feminine frailty....

At closing time I stepped out once more into a daytime present 'when the mountains were again the mountains; the clouds were again the clouds'. A car sped by on the tiny road in front of the museum. I suppose I *could* have been run over. For what I was still experiencing was this profound sense of somehow living the continuation of a glorious past in the present—which is something that no Western museum had ever done for me, being, for the most part, 'dead' places. I don't think I shall ever again experience anything more radiant than my visions of that afternoon in my life. I just knew that I should no longer feel 'alone', which is to live in my own naked spiritual reserves, that the body-mind was capable of being filled up again with the light through the simple process of looking. How easy it all seemed.

I ambled along the road like an old priest, stopping now and again to observe the view, the bloom of a wild rose, a particularly wondrous cloud structure. And since I was walking in the direction of the Buddhist temples of Swayambhu, I decided to proceed into the village. But first a stop at the *chi* or teashop. There was a group of heads sitting on a bench outside, chewing the breeze, smoking the indigenous chillums, and several more inside, in the cavernous half-light.

No one was talking much; it was considered a 'downer'—bad form—to use words, but communication was no less intense for all that. The young Nepalese owner came outside with a mug of thick tea, dark brown and very sweet, and asked if I'd like anything. I shook my head. He smiled, and disappeared into the dark interior of his teashop. The fellow sitting next to me passed me a joint. His eyes stared at me widely, his mouth still hung open as if to keep the last word of his sentence in mid-air. Everyone here believes in all the magic, I thought. I took a couple of deep tokes. 'Good grass,' I said, handing him back his huge seven-skin joint.

He looked at me. And I was reminded of a French poem I'd read somewhere ... 'in the depths of a dilated pupil shines the lamp of the poor'.

As I got up to leave, he asked whether I'd been to the *Bakery Ashram* yet, and he pointed to a small passageway between two buildings. 'Just follow the path and take a left when you get to the temple. They've got a new sound system.'

Since I was stoned anyway, and since I had nothing particularly to do, I decided to follow the path to the *Ashram*.

I heard the electronic music quite clearly through the natural sound of Buddhist chanting outside the temple, and, following the path, came suddenly upon a compound garden filled with lots of young Western heads, all dressed in their *dhotis* and Tibetan shirts and Indian silks.

The *Ashram* comprised two principle buildings, one, a former factory of the now bankrupt SwayambhNath Bakery concern, and the other, a long shed. And it was from the shed that the sounds came.

Inside, seated quietly in a circle round a central fireplace, were about twenty people, mostly male. There were several chillums being passed around simultaneously. Room was quietly made for me to join this charmed circle.

The two five-foot Sony speakers made all verbal communication impossible. It was like sitting on stage with the Stones. The sound of the music eclipsed all cognitive function. It was like a river into which you had been plunged. And all you need do was float, float, F-I-o-a-t.

Hours—maybe even days—passed in an instant. Time ceased to exist for those of us who sat stoned in our mystical ring round the fire. And it was with this insight that I was born into a new world. A new form of consciousness had taken over, that we were somehow all together because in some strange way we had been *brought* here. It was as though a gust of wind had come from another existence, and had plucked us from the streets of Rome and London and Detroit, and propelled us to this Himalayan valley; our new myth-mother.

It had grown dark outside, and the people who had been in the garden, now crowded inside the *Ashram*. The smell of food from the far-end, invisible through the haze of wood-smoke and hashish reminded me that I had not eaten all afternoon. Soon there were people sitting around with plates on their laps eating rice and vegetables with chopsticks. I saw a line of people with empty plates in their hands, so I got up and joined them.

The *Ashram* provided one sensible meal a day, in the evening which cost one rupee to anyone who could afford it, otherwise it was free; tea was a few cents extra.

After we had eaten dinner, the poet Kristof walked across to the record player and switched it off. He returned to his place in the circle. There was a hush, a stillness, a sense of expectancy. Kristof announced that he was going to read a 'love poem', which he had just finished writing. Everyone looked up smiling when Kristof finished; he was assuredly one of their verbal magicians.

It was a strange place this salamandrine *Ashram* of glassy eyes staring from fiery lake beside the sound of music through my leafy dreams ... but soon the speakers were back on again at full blast, so I decided to make my way back to the hotel.

It was dark when I stepped outside, and it was with great difficulty that I found my way down and on to the road again. Swayambhu is about two miles from the city, and I walked slowly, savouring the stillness; no sound from anywhere; even the dogs were quiet as I made my way through the maze of tiny streets and alleyways. The city was almost deserted, yet it could not have been much later than ten o'clock. It reminded me of the City of London at night or downtown New York, after the crowds of office workers had long since gone, the same sort of eerie stillness.

Back in my hotel room, I smoked a nocturnal chillum and then got into bed with a manuscript translation of some poems by the Nepalese master poet, Bhanubhaka Archarya, which Narayan had left with me. There was an interesting description of Kathmandu a century or so back which the poet compared with the Celestial City of Alaka (the god of wealth); he also noted its resemblance to Lhasa, Lucknow and *London*. And it was with these images in my mind that I fell asleep.

I was awakened in the morning by a knock at the door. I stumbled out of bed and opened the door, expecting to find a cleaning-woman. But, no, it was a young, handsome man who introduced himself in perfect English as Madhusudan Thakur from Northern India, a Brahmin, and former English lecturer at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, and a Sanskrit scholar. He had been given my name by Narayan, who had suggested we might have much in common. I apologised for the state of my book-strewn room and invited him in.

Madhu, as he called himself, began to tell me a bit about his life. He had studied English in Canada for three years, and was now into translating Nepalese poetry into English. He was also working on some Sanskrit translations. But what fascinated him most was the increasing

number of young Westerners living in Kathmandu, and their impact on the cultural life of this city. For Kathmandu was the 'third eye' of Asia, and the eye that gets in when reality gets out. It had a special place and played a special role in Asia. In fact, he had written an article on young Western visitors for the leading intellectual monthly magazine *The Rising Nepal* and wanted me to look over the manuscript. It was entitled 'Kathmandu: A Coincidence'. Would I like to hear bits of it? Sure, I said He began to read:

'It happened only the other day by what is called in northeastern India a Samyoga, fair coincidence. At a public place in Kathmandu, two elderly gentlemen debated, and I overheard them in spite of myself. They were discussing whether the large group of young unkempt visitors from the West now in Kathmandu had any principles guiding their visit to the East. The gentleman whose tone of voice caught my attention first was saying "Ini haruko kehi pani siddhanta chhai na", meaning "These people have no principles at all, you know". He seemed to be informing his friend, who, however, paid little attention to his companion's tone and presented his view of a whole ideology motivating and guiding these young people and their venture abroad. They were, he said, on a very important mission indeed. Life in the West had lost its meaning for them and they had come out here to seek and find new meanings, fresh perspectives, among the cultures of the East in art, religion, philosophy, in traditional, time-honoured ways of living, in forms of life and manner still untouched by the sick hurry and commercialism of modern Western civilisation: indeed, they were true seekers.

'A cross-section of the people under discussion sat close by, blissfully unconscious of the conversation that went on around them. I sat between them and wondered.

'In fact, I continue to wonder. Personally, my time in the West, my memories of looks and words after every talk I gave on religious texts, philosophical questions and so forth, convince me that the Western youth today is truly seeking.

'The scene in Kathmandu, despite our cynical gentlemen, remains positive and exciting. Potentially, here is a situation which is a counterpart of a movement to preserve and promote our ancient heritage such as the ideal of a new Sanskrit University. The readiness with which Western youth is willing to accept and undergo, even though temporarily, extreme physical hardship is simply amazing if one considers the conditions in which they have grown up. Living in a world without plumbing and central heating can indeed be for the group under discussion a "spiritual experience" in itself. It is hard to believe that the sacrifice this entails could be motivated simply by the desire for cheap travel around the world. The passionate interest in religious cultures not their own is a fact about young people today which should be given immediate recognition. A new faith is arising and demands, even in its present rudimentary forms, that we try and understand ourselves in terms of the traditions in which others have been nourished. The prejudices aroused by the long hair and beards notwithstanding, it is evident to those who look and listen that there are a certain number of genuine Sadhakas, seekers, among these people.

'Even if life in the West has not lost its point for some, one can see and feel what some of the major political events of the past few years must have done to the more sensitive and intelligent youth of the countries involved and responsible for these events. No one who has observed for himself the mass madness let loose by alcoholism and sexual licence in Western cities, all part of the vast and complex money game, can help looking at the psychedelic movement in a new light.

'I have no wish to saddle our friends with a "philosophy" not because I think there is no philosophy motivating them, but because the quest is still very much on. The gains of the last few years are still in the process of being recorded, the story is yet to be told. We might indeed be living right in "the middle of things", to use a Jamesian image, since Kathmandu promises to become, for some of the characters in the play, the capital of the new world.'

I was very impressed, and said so. I told Madhu that I thought we were all on some kind

of sort of quest and had found in Kathmandu the perfect place to start. Kathmandu was a city of refugees, the new Jerusalem of the *Sadhakas*, who had come to savour of the fruits of Paradise.

We ordered dinner in our room, and were now perfectly relaxed in each other's company. I liked him. He was open and honest and a man for whom the invisible world was obviously visible.

I told him that I was planning to bring out a poetry magazine, but needed more material, especially modern Nepalese poetry. I proposed to include material from the West dealing especially with the nature of the spiritual quest, including some essays by myself on the phenomenon LSD. I said it would serve a two-fold purpose. First, it would introduce Nepalese poetry to Western readers and second, it would enable Nepalese readers to orient themselves to the psychology and background of their young visitors. I had a little money, and since printing was cheap in Kathmandu, I already had enough to cover costs. Madhu said he'd be very interested indeed to help in any way, and that he was already working on the English translations of several poems. And thus began a partnership that resulted in the publication of *Flow One* several months later.

One thing led to another, and before long we had also agreed to start a centre for both Western and Eastern seekers, especially those who wanted to learn Sanskrit. Madhu emphasised the importance of Sanskrit amongst the intellectual artistic circles as well as in the higher levels of Government and at the Palace. Sanskrit played the same role here as Latin did in the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, it was a sort of *lingua franca* of any philosophical discussions.

He said that Narayan would almost certainly be interested in hearing about such a project, and maybe could even get the Crown Prince as its patron. Could we draft an outline proposal, since he would be seeing Narayan for dinner later that evening, and would like to have him put it before the Crown Prince? The sooner we acted, the sooner the project could get official sanction. I would also need permission from the Prime Minister to publish, but he didn't foresee that there would be any problem.

Madhu went downstairs to make a few telephone calls, and I cleared the desk and prepared a chillum to facilitate the creative processes.

When Madhu returned, he looked very excited. Yes, Narayan would like to see the proposal this evening. And he had had some luck. He had called Balakrishna Sama, the Vice-President of the Royal Nepalese Academy, who wanted us to come over to his house for afternoon tea and for a chat. Madhu said that Balakrishna was one of the truly great poets of Nepal, and certainly of international stature. The problem was that Balakrishna wrote his poetry in Nepalese or Sanskrit, though of course his English was perfect. As a result, he was virtually unknown outside his own country, a situation Madhu planned to rectify by translating into English all his work written over the past sixty years. He brought up a chair to the desk, and we began to formulate the proposal. Madhu didn't smoke hash himself, but had no objection if anyone else did. After a couple of chillums and an hour's discussion, we had agreed upon the main details, and all that now remained was to write it. We addressed it to His Royal Highness, The Crown Prince of Nepal.

When we finished, Madhu suggested that we should go round to see Balakrishna Sama who lived at the other end of town, not far from the Chinese Embassy. We took a taxi and within ten minutes were walking up the drive of his house; with Hindu statues in the garden and a huge *Garuda* bird painted on the door. I was already impressed. The house itself was large, half-timbered like a medieval manor, two or three storeys high, and painted white.

A servant let us in and ushered us into one of the downstairs living rooms. He said his master would join us in a moment.

The room was like a miniature museum with statues of stone and bronze of the various Hindu pantheon, paintings and early Nepalese iconography; books in Nepalese, Sanskrit, English and French, and, nicely laid out on a silver-topped table, a Victorian tea-service. We had to wait only a minute or two before the poet entered. He made a short bow and shook hands with us and apologised for keeping us waiting. His English, like so many of

the cultured Nepalese, was almost entirely without accent, and he spoke it with feeling, spontaneously, and without affectation. He was perhaps seventy years of age, delicate and radiant with health, and had the face of a man who had obviously lived a life of the mind, very sensitive and aristocratic, as though his inner and outer worlds matched. He was dressed in shiny blue silk in the traditional Nepalese dress, and I felt that I was in the company of an exceptional, rare person, perhaps even a saint but certainly a wizard of some sort.

He seemed very pleased to see us, especially Madhu, whom he embraced warmly as he beckoned us to the tea-table. His servant appeared with a silver tea-pot, and a plate of cakes and toasted scones.

Madhu then started to talk about the Himal Centre project, and to read him bits of our afternoon's work. Balakrishna was most attentive and sympathetic and said that he would certainly encourage a centre such as we had outlined. The only problem he thought was the financial one. He made a few calculations on a sheet of paper and said that for the scholarships alone we would need \$595,000.

Madhu said that although \$500,000 might sound a like a lot of money, in reality it was not too much if one considered the possibility of help from some of the larger American Foundations, who were used to giving away much larger sums for less realistic projects. I remained silent, though I nodded in agreement with Madhu's analysis.

We then began to discuss the envisaged poetry magazine, *Flow*, which Madhu briefly described. Nepal, being a country in which poetry was highly esteemed, had a lot to offer, and it would make sense to make available some of the best Nepalese poetry in English, as well as make available contemporary Western poetry to Nepalese poetry lovers. Balakrishna then turned to me and asked in his quiet, pleasant way, what the editorial policy might be and whether I thought Nepalese poetry was sufficiently good to warrant translation into an international language like English.

I was pretty stoned and my mind was already soaring into giddy heights of inspiration. '*Flow* is essentially a magazine of poetry, art and religion, and we should dedicate it to the man of tomorrow who has understood the burden of his dim past, synthesised the heritage of his many cultures, solved the crises of the present age and lives according to his genius!'

Balakrishna smiled broadly, and said that Camus, the French Existentialist, had probably meant something similar when he had noted somewhere that 'Real generosity towards the future lies in giving all to the present'.

I then asked the poet whether he would read some of his poems, but he demurred, saying his English was not really good enough to express his meaning, though Madhu could read something if he wished.

Madhu pulled out a fistful of manuscripts from his briefcase.

'I think I'd like to read a verse from your most recent poem, which I have just finished translating—*To Soma*, which was, I believe, inspired by the recent Apollo 11 manned trip to the moon. But I think I ought to explain for the benefit of Michael here, that the word *Soma* in Sanskrit also means "moon" as it is also associated with the sacred elixir of the gods of Vedic times. It was the fruit from the mystical tree of knowledge which, when taken, loosened the "Tongue of the Way" and in this sense would correspond to the Greek ambrosia, the elixir of immortality from the stream of Castalia under the Temple of Diana. '

Madhu stood up, bowed graciously to the poet, who sat silent, his face grave and serious  
...

'Sweetly, O Soma, do I remember you again today,  
Over the last half-century have I been  
Drinking you in, drop by drop, unceasing, ecstatic!  
Once again, O Soma, I grind your vine,  
Grind it with my heart, filter it through my viens, Mingle it with my vision and my  
breath,

To fill the amphora of my heart to the brim!  
O Soma, soaked am I to the very depths  
In the sweet shower of your beams  
Drawn deeply by your gravity,  
Exhilarated, breathless as I swing  
And go steadily gliding, gliding,  
I too fly upwards with Apollo Eleven! ... '

It was a long poem followed by a long silence, and we all looked as if something very special had happened, like the shock following upon a great discovery. Impatient or unwilling to remain silent, I finally broke the spell by saying that it was one of the most incredible poems that I had ever heard, and that I wanted to put it into the magazine for the world to read. I also added, by way of a comment, that I had arrived in Kathmandu on the very same day that Apollo 11 had blasted off for the moon. Balakrishna then said, looking at me straight in the eyes, though centred in the middle of my forehead: 'A most auspicious omen for you.'

It was time to go, and we stood up, bowed and took our leave. Madhu danced down the driveway, obviously pleased by our reception. There were no taxis in sight and I told Madhu that I'd really prefer to walk back to the hotel, which was fine with him. The evening breeze made the walk bearable, and I felt very good indeed. We talked a lot on the way about the magazine, the shape it should take, who might be able to print it in English, things like that. But my mind was strangely elsewhere, as if the experience with Balakrishna Sama had been more than simply meeting a master poet. I felt very close to the man in some odd, unaccountable way. Perhaps in him I had at last found my 'guru'? We soon reached the centre of the city, and taking Madhu back into my confidence, I asked him whether he could find me a house to rent, somewhere nice, perhaps on the edge of the city, and with many rooms. Madhu said he'd look into it immediately. We said goodbye at Kanti Path, and I cut across the park in the direction of my hotel. It was a beautiful evening, cool and pleasant in the evening light, the mountains still visible as silhouettes in the far distance. I again experienced that expansion of feeling, a new mental amplitude, difficult to describe but quite intense. It was my own self reborn out of the vibrations of this holy city; it was my own self which warms in the sun, refreshes in the evening breeze, glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees.... In the distance I heard the sound of a temple flute and bell and the song of the cicada as it sung itself ... utterly ... a-w-a-y. Why grasp so earnestly after hallucinations and flowers in the air when it was all here, at one's feet? For as one's sense of reality deepens, which it does with age, one's need to integrate with the world is very great indeed. And I felt that at least here, in this Paradise city, I should make myself yet one more dwelling place. Back in my hotel room, after a light dinner of rice and vegetables, contentedly I prepared a chillum, and poured out some fruit wine. How otherwise shall we take our pleasure here ... and if ever I am asked again 'What for the future?' it will be with a finger pointed to the moon that I shall reply.

### **Three months later ...**

The monsoon was over. The air was as clear and fresh as Vichy water. I had rented the lower two floors of a large house called 'Shangri-La' in Bijuswari, a secluded suburb of Kathmandu close to Swayambhu. The house belonged to the Nepalese Director of Tourism, Tirtha Raj Tuladhar, a Buddhist and a man of great personal charm and sensitivity, who had translated many of King Mahendra's poems into English. And from my window I had a clear view across the valley to the distant snow-capped peaks of the high Himalayan range. The house stood by itself in a narrow lane which was really a cul-de-sac and was thus unvisited by motorised transport, except once in the morning and once in the evening when a chauffeur-driven car came to pick up and deliver the Tourist Director. It was a haven of stillness, and the only sounds you heard were natural ones—

of birds, or animals or passing people. There was a large meadow extending across the lane; and a large well-kept garden immediately in front of the house, which seemed forever ablaze with flowers, especially roses, which the tourist director would tend for hours at a time, removing by hand, bugs from the petals and leaves, one at a time, never killing them, but putting them on a sheet of paper and every now and then blowing them off into the winds of fate or fortune. A typically Buddhist gesture. An orchard of pear and apple trees flanked either side of the house and at the very rear, beyond the back garden was a small *stupa* of exquisite design. It was an ideal place to be. This was my landscape, the one that absorbed me, with joy, into the hot blood of myths and gods, back into the roots of total being in which, at times I could truly believe that there was no longer any 'I' or 'me' but that I was somehow the All.

And in the mornings, with my rooms filled with bright sunlight and the sound of temple bells opening the well of my ears, I could feel that inexpressible peace ... as:

Unseen today  
In brightest sunlight, and yet  
Today how beautiful, Mother Nepal.

I was learning that man is born in ignorance of his element, and must somehow find it, like the cygnet finds the water.

My mornings would usually start early, shortly after daybreak. I had a small paraffin burner on which I would make my breakfast, usually a plate of porridge made from water-buffalo milk, and several cups of tea, followed by a chillum. I usually took this in the garden. I'd then try to work a little on the magazine manuscripts before Madhu would arrive, usually at about ten o'clock. It was an idyllic existence.

Kris, the poet, would usually join us for lunch, and after lunch we would be joined by five or six other Westerners for some Sanskrit lessons, which Kris had arranged. He had a degree in Sanskrit from Oxford, and was a very patient, clever teacher, who used his skill to get us to learn this amazing language.

But mostly my time was taken up with the manifold problems of getting the magazine together. We had found three printers and had decided to parcel the material out as three separate sections, which we would then assemble into the final magazine. Already the shape of the magazine was discernible, if in silhouette only, but the energy was there—my slight paranoia was that with the unlimited amount of hashish and LSD we had, all this energy would dissipate before completion, for with psychedelics the impetus to 'attend to business' is not always present! So it was something of an effort of will, for I was determined to get the damn thing published, even if it killed me, which, as it turned out, it very nearly did through what you would call over-indulgence in drugs (though other matters played their part, like rising costs and two of the printers refusing to print or return the manuscripts entrusted to them).

The least of my difficulties, surprisingly enough, was obtaining official permission from the Prime Minister to publish the magazine. I had been told by various people, including the French Ambassador, that no foreigner had ever received such permission, 'not even the Americans'. And the British Embassy was equally sure that I would be refused, though in every other way they were most encouraging.

I needed, of course, someone who had access to the Prime Minister and who was also a poet. And I found my man in the person of Soorya Bahadur Singh. He was an extraordinary gentleman in his late thirties, who worked in the Singha Durba, the parliament building, and who wrote poetry in English. He came round to see me one day with a pile of poems about one foot deep, which he wanted me to publish.

Mr. Singh had connections inside the Parliament—his brother was private secretary to the King. So I asked him to arrange for me to see the Prime Minister. This he arranged in a matter of a few hours for the following day, which didn't leave me much time to find something suitable to wear. My normal dress was a Tibetan shirt and dhoti, a piece of coloured Indian cloth wrapped around my waist, and my shoes had long since been given away to a Tibetan Buddhist priest, who had wanted them for his Rimpoche (a High Lama)



as a gift.

Accordingly, as soon as Singh told me that I had to be at the Singha Durba at eleven o'clock the next morning, I went into town to buy an outfit. I settled for what I was told was a traditional Nepalese costume for formal occasions. It was made of silver cloth and the trousers were right up to the knees and opened up at the top like jodhpurs, together with a long jacket nearly down to the middle of the thigh. The collar was tied by means of ribbons. I also got a pair of cheap Indian sandals.

I spent most of the night preparing my brief, and felt able to answer any questions the Prime Minister might put to me. Mr. Singh came with a taxi at 10.30 to take me to the Singha Durba. He seemed to be almost as nervous as I was. I had difficulty getting dressed in my new Nepalese clothes—the legs were too tight, but I finally managed to get into them, and off we set.

The Singha Durba was an impressive building, huge and in the style of architecture of the British Raj. The taxi dropped us off at the main entrance. The entire building seemed to be a labyrinth of corridors, and we walked rapidly, moving through this maze, up stairways, down small corridors, along long ones until we stopped before two huge polished mahogany doors with a sparkling brass curved doorknob. Mr. Singh knocked, and we entered. This was the Secretary's office. The secretary was a pleasant young man, who smiled broadly when he saw me, and said that the Prime Minister was expecting us. He disappeared for a moment through another set of huge doors, and then came out and indicated that we were to enter.

The Prime Minister sat at a desk at the far end of a palatial room. He was wearing a white open-necked shirt with the sleeves rolled up. When he stood up to greet us, I noticed that he was wearing ordinary Western-style navy blue trousers and a belt. It was quite a distance from the door to his desk, but already I sensed a *faux pas* on my part. The Prime Minister began to smile as we approached and the smile gradually broadened into a grin. By the time we reached his desk he was almost uncontrollably shaking with suppressed laughter.

Of course I didn't know it then, but the costume I had bought ready-made from one of the tourist shops was from a period around about 1890—as though in the West I had gone to meet an official dressed up in a Dickensian outfit.

But the broad grin was infectious, and I, too, was laughing when we shook hands. Tears streamed down the Prime Minister's face as he took the form that Singh handed him and which he had to sign before we could officially go ahead with the publication of Flow. He hardly glanced at it, and signing it with a flourish, managed to say between giggles, 'I hope you don't write anything bad about Nepal.'

Mr. Singh then bowed and said that was all and that we now had permission to print. I said I thought the Prime Minister was an exceptionally jolly fellow. And Singh merely nodded. He then asked me whether I'd like a tour of the building, to which I readily assented. We must have walked three or four miles through the endless lengths of corridors, and somehow ended up walking along a subterranean corridor, lit by light coming through tiny iron-barred windows. Singh said he had to see someone for a moment, and we went into an incredibly small room that seemed to be littered everywhere—on the shelves, on the floor, on the desks, with bundles of envelopes. There was a very old man sitting at one of the desks, who barely glanced up as we entered. 'This is the censor's office and this is the chief censor. I think I will show him the Prime Minister's signature on our document, just in case.' Singh said something to the Censor and gave him the signed piece of paper. The Censor removed the thin wire spectacles which he had been using to read the letters, and produced a magnifying glass, and read the paper Singh had handed him.

He nodded, dug out a stamp from a drawer, and after putting some ink on to the pad, stamped the document. 'Now it's completely official. We can publish anything we want.'

I was glad to get out of the building with its associations of prison and other large institutions, and I welcomed Singh's suggestion that we should go somewhere and celebrate, which for Singh meant getting very drunk. I called an American teacher friend and asked him if he could let me have a bottle of whisky, explaining the purpose, for it

was still not yet noon. No problem. And by mid-afternoon we were both reeling about the centre of Kathmandu singing songs and reciting poetry. Finally we got to Rana's teashop, and stumbled in. All the heads turned as we noisily entered. And on many of the bearded faces was a look of disapproval. Rana's was a place for chillums and pop music, not a bar. Singh insisted on having the music turned off, then climbed on to the top of a table and, with tears streaming down his face, said that never in his entire life had he met such a great poet as Michael Hollingshead, and that it was his wish that everyone in the teashop should stand up and sing 'God Save the Queen'. A few heads split immediately, sensing a scene. And Rana just stood there watching, not knowing quite what to do. Finally, I managed to pull Singh off the table and out from the teashop into the yard. I then carried him to a taxi and paid the driver to take him back to the Singha Durba to sleep it off.

And thus the days passed into weeks and then into months. By now we had a lot of material ready for the printers. I had also got a translation of one of the King's poems, which I decided to print in red. It was called *A Self-Portrait* ...

'Like the dark night I am  
Whose moon has strayed away;  
Like the wild withered tree  
That all its leaves has lost.

With rotten, hollowed roots,  
Ready I am to fall;  
A faded flower I  
With none to care for me.

A blind man I who gropes  
Fumbling the stark mid-path;  
And such a burning fire  
That has no warmth to give.

Ever am I in the mid-stream  
About to sink beneath the waves;  
I am a drowned soul,  
Whose shore lies far away.'

It was a very fine poem, and modest, considering that King Mahendra was the supreme ruler of Nepal, and also recognised as an incarnation of the Hindu God Vishnu. I had also had quite a few acid sessions during the time I had been there was a constant stream of visitors coming to 'Shangri-la' to score some 'sunshine'. There was quite a bit of acid in the city, mostly brought in by Californians or some of the bigger dealers, who would exchange acid for hashish. I believe LSD was known by the few Nepalese who used it as 'Western hash'.

It was traditional to take LSD at full moon, and people would congregate at the *Bakery Ashram*, and drop it in the late evening so that they could listen to music during the night, followed by a climb up to the Buddhist temples to join the monks for early morning service. It was very rare that anyone ever freaked out' or went berserk, though it could happen. I remember a young Dutch boy who, when he got to the temple, took off all his clothes and began running amok, knocking over prayer bowls and trying to climb up on to the head of a huge bronze Buddha. There was nothing we could do to quieten him down, and we felt it had all gone a little too far. The monks, who had been chanting during all of this had seemingly not paid any attention, that is until the statue began to sway and it looked as if it would come crashing down. About six monks suddenly moved across to grab him, and gently they carried him back to the circle of other monks. They then tied him up and gagged him and placed him in the centre, and continued their *mantras* as if nothing had happened.

But perhaps the thing that disturbed local people the most was that, on average, one girl

a month would flip out on acid and insist on walking through the centre of the city completely naked. I think the Nepalese were terribly shocked by this, for often the girl would be extremely beautiful. I think the syndrome, as far as one can say anything about human behaviour, is connected with the notion of total freedom, the freedom to walk naked being merely a manifestation of this wish. Throwing off your clothes is an act of liberation. Or so someone once told the young Californian girl whom I saw briefly just before she was put on the plane to India, having been found by a policeman wandering naked through the main street. I think there was also a great fear on the part of the authorities that one day King Mahendra might see such a spectacle, and that would create a major incident, for the king had a habit of cruising the streets at odd hours behind the wheel of his Ferrari.

In fact, although I was not held directly responsible in the case of the American girl, it had not escaped the notice of the authorities that I was somehow involved with the LSD-cult, as they called it. At first it had seemed innocent enough, merely another religious group, who used something similar if not identical to hashish, which had a place in certain forms of Eastern worship. But this thing about girls taking off their clothes every now and then had them worried. Consequently, I was approached by one of the editors of the English language daily, *The Rising Nepal*, who asked whether I would write an article for the paper about what young Westerners were doing in Kathmandu. 'It would help relations with the public very much indeed; yes, really, very, very much. Thank you.'

I did so, and called the article 'The Divine Mutants' which was sufficiently obscure I thought, with still a slight religious or spiritual bias.

#### 'THE DIVINE MUTANTS

'The term, "hippy", if a recent journalist can be believed was invented by the media so that ordinary people would have something to pray for salvation from. If so, and if the phenomenon "hippy" is the unholy invention of sub-editors and people with mass circulation magazines to sell, we ought to be able to look at the matter more objectively and see what myths and legends have sprung up around this strange creature.

'One thing is certain, however, there is an increasing acceleration of young people "dropping out" of our Western sort of society, who prefer to "stand on their own two feet" rather than have their lives directed from without, by the system (economic-political-social). This group, variously estimated (*Timemagazine*) to be between seven and ten million under the age of twenty-six, has claimed new areas for its own. It has developed a new life-style or an existential mode of being which, if still lacking proper articulation, seems nonetheless to be an attraction for some of the most gifted and sensitive minds of our modern generation; there is something vital and energetic and intelligent about what these young people are doing. In the words of their "High Priest", Timothy Leary, who also coined their slogan *Turn On* (to your own nervous system) *Tune in* (to the energy within your own mind) *Drop out* (of the socioeconomic system): "The generation born after 1945 is perhaps the wisest and holiest generation that the human race has ever seen ... and, by God, instead of lamenting derogating, and imprisoning them, we should support them, all turn on with them."

'Yet for those so identified by Leary, the "dropping out" foreshadows social developments which are bound to take place in Western society as a whole, for as automation increases and when only a small percentage of the people will do most of the work, leisure will be the problem or, rather, too much leisure, for the old ethic of work and salvation cannot survive in a society where perhaps only five per cent of the top executive and administration do all of the work-indeed, within the foreseeable future, *the big reward in life will be to be allowed to work*.

'Meanwhile, we are living in a strange confusing period of transition from one life-style to another quite different one. From the philosopher's point of view, I think, we are seeing a change in the nature of Western man due to a shift of emphasis away from a theological revelation to an ontologist mysticism, that is, authority of a Divine Person to the more individually "free" belief in absolute Nature. In either approach to

God, we are reminded that we are summoned to a deeper spiritual awareness, far beyond the level of subject-object. One of the attractions of Central Asia for some of the young seekers is that the religions here see man's unity with God in an ontological and natural principle in which all beings are metaphysically *one*. Here there is unity in Absolute Being (*Atman*) or in the Void (*Sunyata*).

'It is one way that still remains for Western man to save himself from becoming Reality's dupe, that is, the slave of some external control (which we see as an inevitable result of television, which keeps millions of minds literally imprisoned by invisible lines of pull and force, and soon there will be more sophisticated hardware, such as 3-D holography, where images will literally appear to be actually *present within you inside your living-room*. If you want to see an elephant, plug in the tape marked "elephant" and one will appear, hovering in your drawing-room and safe too. And it won't leave any mess to have to clear up afterwards. For such people, the cinematic world of labour-saving devices and the good health that goes with it is probably the best place to be.) "A lifetime of freedom! Why, no man alive could stand it; it would turn his life on earth into a complete hell", says Bernard Shaw. And for the older, conservative members of society this is a fair observation. Freedom is too difficult for most people to bear, and for those who have lived a lifetime of conformity and spiritual neglect, freedom is impossible, that is, short of mystical revelation. The young man or woman is aware that as the political inhumanity of this century increases (with a corresponding erosion of certain liberal and humanist values) so too will the illegality of our various legal actions that seek to keep bodies of men pressing down on other bodies of men, and all for so little reason. Society, to such a young educated thinking person seems to be growing infertile, devoid of a living culture, no longer productive of any personal form, abstract, lifeless in the face of machine-made interpretations about the self, the world, and the other people in it. No wonder, then, if modern man sees himself as nothing but a cipher on the face of a moral and spiritual void. And as the knowledge of his own disorientation cannot be handled quantitatively, he turns more and more to his brave world of machines. And through the power of his machines he acts out the uncomprehended tragedy of his inner disruption. He is therefore cut off from any reality except that of his own processes, which he cannot understand, and his machines, which he can understand, but which cannot provide answers or even directions which would enable him to regain the former lost paradise of close contact with nature and the world of living things, including himself. As the Ancient Chinese sage, Shuang Tzu, discovered some 2500 years ago, dependence even on a simple kind of machine causes man to become uncertain of his own inner impulses, and he may even forget how to master his own world. Naturally, the advance of science and technology during the past 150 years is irreversible, and modern man now has come to terms with himself in his new situation. Yet he cannot do so, it seems to many modern thinkers, if he builds an irrational and unscientific faith on the absolute and final objectivity of a *scientific* knowledge of nature. For the study of man is also concerned with the core of the unknowable at the heart of man which cannot by its nature become the subject of finite analysis like a plant or animal species but is an area of human experience accessible through the intervention of a sacrament, which is whatever it is that helps make God present in man. (A sacrament is something that engenders in those who use it certain spiritual resonances which defy exact analysis and cannot be accurately described to one who does not experience authentically in himself.)

'And perhaps the start of any process of the personality towards independence, self-direction, and control must start with question and the search for an answer; with the question which again and again implies a calling in question the destruction of accepted ideas and stereotyped world-pictures and rote-learning and imprints—in a word, revolution; the question that both cost Socrates his life and made it of such value.

'So perhaps we ought to look more kindly on the youthful pioneers who see our future world as one in which there is none but one, and each person owns nothing but the

whole. And the phenomenon of so many young people who think this way is all the more significant if you take Kathmandu as an allegory of the possibility of conformity, not merely of one young growing person to one particular communal place or social development, but of a whole generation to a complete, if at times imperfect, greater society.'

The editor seemed very pleased with the article and asked whether I'd like to write more for them. I then wrote a series on Tantra called 'Old Art in the Hands of New Artists (Notes on the relevance of Tantra to Modern Western Art Movement)' which they wanted to serialise over twelve issues.

Tantra, in fact, had interested me a lot during my stay in the East, and I had consulted both Lhasa-trained Buddhist *tantrikas* as well as Hindu masters. There was also a Western Hindu monk called Bhagawan Dass, from California, who practised Tibetan Tantra vitally and who had a lot to tell me about its left-handed aspect. It was also Bhagawan Dass who first took Richard Alpert to his guru in India, Neem Karolli Baba. Richard was converted into orthodox Hinduism and given the name *Baba Ram Dass*, or 'servant of God'. He claims to be able to maintain a 'forty per cent hashish high' *without* the use of drugs or sex, which is admirable.

My talks with both Bhagawan Dass and Baba Ram Das confirmed that their guru had used LSD: in fact, the first time he did so was when Bhagawan introduced him to Ram Dass. The story of what happened is now part of LSD lore, but is worth repeating, even so. The guru asked about LSD, and Ram Dass said that it did something equivalent to what he had read about in the writings of the mystics, both Eastern and Western. The guru asked Richard, as he then was, if he had any. Richard said he had six 'whitelightning' pills left, and that they were very powerful indeed. The guru asked Richard to give them to him. And promptly swallowed them. Richard sat silent watching for any sign. An hour passed. Finally, Richard asked the Baba what effects he was experiencing. 'None', exclaimed the guru. And Richard was immediately impressed and declared his allegiance to the guru, and gave him his Land Rover.

There was very little interest in LSD amongst the Nepalese, however, with one notable exception, Rama Prasad Manandhar, who had been the Nepalese Ambassador in London for seven years (he had once entertained Queen Elizabeth to dinner at his London Embassy). Rama Prasad was a *tantrika*, a poet, and a philosopher, a man of wide learning and culture, who lived in one of the oldest and most beautiful houses in the city.

He came round to visit me one day, and a friendship sprang up. One thing led to another and finally he asked me one day whether he could try some LSD. We arranged a session at 'Shangri-la', and I told him the strength or dosage, and he selected a dose of about 300 gamma, which was quite a lot for a first trip.

The session was very quiet, meditative, and serious. Rama Prasad did not talk very much. I remained totally silent. About midway through the session, Rama Prasad complained about being indoors, and said that he would like to go into the garden. We walked into the garden together. It was a beautiful afternoon of bright sunlight, and everything looked absolutely radiant and perfect. Rama walked over to one of the roses upon which a gorgeous butterfly had just alighted. And exclaimed: 'We must try to expand the "moment" into infinite duration!' He asked for a pen and paper and then wrote a poem, which I reproduce exactly as he wrote it and as I published it later in *Flow One*. It is called *The Momentand The One-Ment*.

'THE MOMENT' and 'THE ONE-MENT'

Rama Prasad Manandhar

At the crest of Time I stood:  
On one side, as far as eye could reach  
And beyond  
In the dim-most stretch of history

Was the Past—  
 A never-ending chain of events.  
 On the other side,  
 Looking towards things yet to come.  
 Yet to become,  
 Creatures waiting to be born,  
 Deeds waiting to be done,  
 History waiting to be made,  
 Actions and reactions,  
 Causations and fruitions,  
 Was the Future—  
 A never-ceasing chain of events.

In between, I stood:  
 At the summit of Time,  
 At the MOMENT—  
 When the obverse and the reverse,  
 The depths of the Past  
 And the obtrusions of the Future  
 Were perfectly united in the Moment—  
 The Moment which knew no dimensions,  
 But which contained all the dimensions  
 Of the Past as of the Future.

The Butterfly had just scarcely alighted  
 On the tip of the rose-petal,  
 The rose a-bloom at the topmost zenith of its glory,  
 Just the fraction of a second before it would show  
 The very first sign of wilting—all too soon;  
 In the perch of the butterfly  
 There was still the heat of the coming,  
 Also already apparent was the rush of the going away;  
 But at the Moment,  
 For a Moment,  
 The coming and the going stood transfixed in the hush of the stillness.

In the kiss of the lovers  
 At the climax of the touch,  
 There lay implicit the fulfilments of the Past  
 And the expectancies of the Future  
 Inextricably built together  
 Into the one undivided jointure—  
 In the present Moment.

The deep-mouthed bay of the hound  
 As it barked he the garden  
 At the Moment,  
 Oh! How exquisite it was!  
 As if the whole of the world's past history  
 Had been but a preparation for that perfect sound.  
 The Present Moment—  
 How beautiful, how sublime, how full!  
 Full with the blending of all the joys of the Past and the Future—  
 How ugly, how horrid, how full!  
 Full with all the sorrows beaten, fused together  
 Like an unsplit hair,  
 Like the yang and the yin,  
 The positive and the negative,

The sweetness and the sourness,  
That champagne-most-ness,  
Indissolubly unified  
Like salt in the sea-water,  
Like the meaning to the word,  
Like Gouri to Shiva—

This is more than full:  
This is the Perfect, the Absolute.  
The undifferentiated,  
The uncreated,  
God without diffuseness,  
God, the All-Knowing, the All-Enjoying,  
Reality without name and form,  
Beyond duration and beyond occupation,  
The Real Permanent:  
The Real Truth,  
The Real Strength,  
The Real Bliss—THE 'ONE-MENT'.

It was shortly after the Ambassador's session that Rama Prasad came round to see me about arranging a meeting with the celebrated Buddhist monk and saint, His Holiness—Gyalwa Karmapa, who was visiting Kathmandu and staying with the monks at SwayambhNath. Rama knew Karmapa quite well, and had even entertained him once at a reception in his town house. I was naturally very interested in having an audience with Karmapa, for I had heard and read much about him. He was the head of the Kagyudpa Order of Tibetan Mahayana Buddhism, and recognised as the sixteenth Karmapa incarnation.

The audience was arranged for dawn on the following morning, and Rama Prasad said he'd pick me up at my house in his car.

I stayed up all that night, preparing myself for the temple meeting, and performing chillum and acid Sadhana. When Rama Prasad collected me, I was very stoned indeed, and could hardly find my way out of the garden into the Mercedes. Then we sped off into the blackness and reached the top of Swayambhu just as the first light of dawn appeared through the gaps between the surrounding mountains. It was a glorious sight. And I felt a very special sense of reverence; there was a holiness about the place, more intense than I had ever experienced there before; my head and heart were open to anything.

We were taken up some stairs to the top floor and shown into an antechamber where a monk tied a piece of orange cloth around my neck. He then indicated that I should follow him, and he led me from the chamber into a huge *sal* brilliant with *tankas*, and murals, and statues. At the far end, seated on a throne, sat Karmapa; and next to him, seated on a cushion in the full lotus position, was Rama Prasad.

I approached Karmapa slowly, my eyes to the floor, with short bows every few steps. When I reached the throne, I looked up and saw a beam of bright light issuing from the centre of his silver crown or it may have been a beam of sunlight catching a reflection through the lattice-work windows. But the effect was quite startling. It really could seem that he was emitting light from his 'third eye' in the centre of his forehead. I recovered from this startling hallucination, sufficiently anyhow to hand him the white silk scarf I had brought as a present. Karmapa then spoke to me through an interpreter: 'According to the tradition since the Buddha, it has been customary to preserve the record of gifts, as a token of one's inner sense of benevolence. This is so that it may serve as a historical record of the *Dharma* too. Your name will therefore be added to the names of people contributing to this tradition.'

I was then asked to say anything I wished to Karmapa.

What I wished to say was for the future: to see many of the Lamas and families of the esoteric *Dharma* move to the West. And, how this work could be furthered by the lamas

opening a dialogue with the Chiefs and Elders of the North American Indian Tribe called the *Hopi* whose villages I had once visited in Arizona. The lands of the North American Indians stretch from parts of Canada down to the Mexican border and comprise some of the most beautiful countryside in the world, parts of which are remarkably similar to Tibet, particularly in Colorado and New Mexico. But these lands are now under siege again, for, as the indigenous Indian population is encouraged to leave the reservations and accept an alien white culture—which is happening in the case of the young Indians at a truly frightening rate—these holy lands will be taken over in a few years by the U.S. Government, and then by the builders. Yet potentially they could provide a sort of 'spiritual backbone' for a future, more spiritualized America.

Karmapa remained silent throughout all this. When I had finished, he beckoned me closer and, as I bent my head, his hands touched the centre of my head, and suddenly, unaccountably, like a bolt, I experienced *Samadhi* one of the most extraordinary moments of consciousness of which man is capable. And I felt utterly and completely cleansed, as though the divine thunderbolt had gone through me like a million volt charge. It was a feeling that was to remain with me for quite some days.

The memory of this great Initiation persists. I believe that on that special morning when I met Karmapa my life was changed and in ways that I am only now beginning to understand, which I have yet to assimilate, and, in time, express outwardly and through my being. For if ever there were a living god, Karmapa is it: of this I am utterly convinced.

Ninety-five per cent of all Buddhists, from Ladakh to NEFA (North Assam) belong to the *Kargyudpa* esoteric sect, of which Karmapa is the spiritual leader.

Like all the other Karmapa incarnations, His Holiness is famous for his erudite scholarship, integrity of character, and excellence in yogic practices. The embodiment of compassion, in human form, Karmapa cares for and loves all human beings, and takes pains for their spiritual salvation.

He is equally well-honoured and followed by Kings, Lamas and laymen, in Tibet, China, Mongolia, India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, as also throughout south-east Asia, Japan, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Canada, Great Britain, U.S.A., Sweden, Denmark, Spain, etc., etc.

And daily now Karmapa prays for the world ... 'May all spiritual leaders enjoy long lives and prosperity. May the *Singha* multiply and fulfill their duties. May the blessings of the *Dharma* liberate all departed souls. In the world may sickness, poverty, wars and all evil influences be cut at the root and destroyed. May all things of the *Kali Yuga* (Black Age) be dispersed.'

Finally, of course, the first number of *Flow* appeared, minus about half the material, which two of the printers had kept after I refused to pay increased printing costs, which I considered to be very unfair.

And the dedication read:

TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS  
THE CROWN PRINCE OF NEPAL  
AND HER ROYAL HIGHNESS  
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR MARRIAGE  
KATHMANDU FEBRUARY 27, 1970

The days drifted lazily. I had made a number of friends in Kathmandu, both Nepali and Western, and would often spend pleasant afternoons walking around the city, occasionally venturing forth to BoudhiNath, a small Tibetan settlement just outside Kathmandu, with a characteristic huge *stupa* or temple in the centre of the village, with three large eyes painted on the top, which were visible from afar—one of the silent sentinels of Kathmandu Valley. It was a colourful place—the old Tibetan women slowly circumnavigating the temple, spinning the eternal prayer-wheels, the men hanging around in change shops, a few Easterners buying Tibetan ornaments and clothes in the inevitable string of tourist shops. One of the large houses around the *stupa* belonged to



the Chini Lama, and, having heard that the stupa had been recently struck by lightning, I decided to pay him a visit one afternoon, for the Chini Lama was like the unofficial mayor of BoudhiNath and the guardian of the *stupa*, which he generously endowed. According to local gossip the Chini Lama had been doing a good trade moving *tankas*, Tibetan rugs, and hashish and the lightning thunderbolt had struck the *stupa* as an obvious warning from above.

The Lama received me hospitably with the traditional salt-and-butter tea, brought in by a lovely girl. As we sat and talked, I was impressed by his incredible outfit, which included orange-red robes in various silks, a fur hat, from underneath which his smiling eyes looked at me with a penetrating curiosity. I finally asked him about the lightning matter, whereupon he told me that it was indeed an auspicious omen as he had found a *Garuda* egg embedded in the *stupa* just afterwards. I beheld in my stoned mind's eye a vision of a mythical bird, for the *Garudais* a familiar creature to the readers of Hindu mythology, not unlike the phoenix in appearance, whose wings are made of gold studded with diamonds; so I suggested that I could arrange for an incubator to be sent out to the *stupa*, if there were any real possibility of hatching such an unusual bird as the *Garuda*. The Chini Lama looked at me wistfully for what seemed like a long time and finally said: 'I am afraid it is too late. I have already sold the egg to a Hong Kong businessman. The shell is famed throughout China as a great aphrodisiac.'

We parted on the best of terms and he suggested that I visit the monastery of Ogmin Chang Chub Choling, established by a former Miami beauty Queen, Princess Zinaide de Rachevski, who had been ordained into the Tantric Buddhist Order by His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, who had also shaved off her head of hair; and it was rumoured she was the first incarnation of Madame Blavatski...

It was a two-mile walk from the village, and I made the ascent of the hill with some difficulty; the path was fairly steep and narrow and I had to avoid occasional flocks of descending goats and the occasional water-buffalo led by tiny Nepalese children. The hill levelled out and soon I was inside the gates of the monastery. The Abbess was sitting on the lawn in a circle of beautiful girls with the occasional male *sadhu* seated quietly within their midst.

I sat down next to Zina, as she liked to be known by old friends (we had known each other briefly in New York, in the mid-sixties, during her time there as a stunning East Side socialite), and she told me many interesting things about the training people received at the monastery, the essence of transmission being telepathy or more exactly *darshan*—a kind of 'flash' or vibration that is transmitted in the *guru-gela* relationship.

One of the resident Lamas, who had received his training in Lhasa, now spoke a little English, and during the course of the conversation I asked him about the Chinese invasion into Tibet. The Lama gave me a curious answer: From one point of view the invasion had been an historical tragedy, certainly for the Tibetan people who were now scattered as refugees throughout the Indian continent. Yet from another vantage point, the 'cosmic' one, this was all somehow necessary in order to spread the *dharma* and make of this planet earth a Heaven for all living creatures. 'The seven seals of silence were broken and a new epoch would come.'

Now my time in this tiny Himalayan Kingdom had come to an end. I had lived in Kathmandu for one year and had seen and experienced many new things, and much had been given, more, indeed, than I could ever hope to repay. But some inner restlessness was calling me back to the West, and I decided to follow its prompting. Thus it was on one sun-drenched morning in August that I boarded the tiny DC-9 to Calcutta and thence by connecting jet to London, arriving back in the metropolis the next day as though in a foreign city, lost, and not a little sad for what I saw.... What had I really learned in my decade of bizarre psychedelic trips? That it takes a great deal of acid to produce even a little elevation of consciousness? That there are times we can know more than we can tell? That reality must still count for something? That it is impossible to become what one is never not? That the future lies in a Tantric vision of cosmic sexuality combined with a cult of ecstasy? That we can make of the planet earth a Holy Land yet? Or is it with a finger pointed to the moon that I should reply? But one thing is certain: that there is no

need to mean by a 'culture of humanity' anything more than the liberation of the higher faculties. Whoever has any experience in this matter will know how right Cato was when he said: ... 'Never is he more active than when he does nothing, never is he less alone than when he is by himself.'

What at last is left for the psychedelic theorist? Must he honour the extreme doctrine of individualism and concede that, after the elimination of radical evil and the provision of material abundance, people must be left alone, simply to be and do what they want?

Our mind craves dreams, those magical realms, for ever present between somewhere and nowhere, which beguile us with a thralldom all their own and help keep our sense of wonder alive. And if the new 'matter-of-factness' encroaches on our brain to no other end than to make of our life a thing and not, as it longs to be, an instrument of self-transcendence, we feel distressed by our inability to dream as once we did; and all delight is gone, our life somehow diminished, which is the cause of most of the *angst* the self-the knowledge that what is most human in our life is being determined not by our 'true' needs, which are divined from the centre of our being, opening like the petals of the lotus and are beyond thought, beyond intellect, 'beyond striving', but are on the contrary, determined entirely by external forces, through no choice of ours.

We are at once the victims and the beneficiaries of modern technological advances.

Reality is now the new myth-making substance. We are manipulated by man-made dreams which develop artificial wants: frozen and tasteless foods, bland, homogenised lives; cliché-ridden beliefs and standardised rituals; conspicuous consumption; the 'pooled self-esteem' our Western forms of nationalism make possible; mechanical gadgets; devotion to science and the 'preality-principle'; and the abandonment of any religious revelation, so that even our religious leaders and intellectuals do not use words like 'spiritual' and 'idealistic' at all freely, for they are themselves quite happy with their material comforts and the labour-saving world of gadgets and good health that goes with them, and would consider those who preached that the happiness people want should be sought for in any kind of *nirvana*, *mystic ecstasy*, *theoria*, *transcendence*, as certainly other-worldly.

What the spread of technological culture has done is to push the boundaries of the literal miracle, the 'other-world', the magical far outside the range of ordinary everyday human happiness. Miracles, our politicians tell us, do not originate in some supernatural religious state but must be realised in this world and have their basis in the familiar facts of technological progress, in communication, education, transportation, public health, etc., etc. But those who have found a source of happiness in a life of the spirit are of the opinion that there has been a retrogression in our aim for a true culture of humanity. While we are busily pouring ever-increasing intellectual efforts into improving our means, we have forgotten the ends they are intended to achieve. Do we really know what we want?

This question is more likely to be answered in the Alternative literature of protest, the theme of vagabondage, and the exploration of individual human consciousness via drugs, Zen Buddhism, Yoga, esotericism, Buddha, the Hermetic arts, alchemy, visionary experience, Tantra, *hesychast* methods, hypostatic union of Christ and man, and all the charismas of the spirit. Those who affirm that the real truth and source of all human joy and happiness lies wholly 'within' must try, with whatever means they can get, to break the hold of that view of life which has replaced the potentialities of the human mind with the perspective of its mechanical extensions, the extensions of transportation and social planning and mass conditioning which are now turning on the body and strangling it as the serpents did at Laocoon.

Modern society is growing infertile, devoid of a living culture, no longer productive of any personal form, an abstract, lifeless, cinematic world of machine-made interpretations about the self. It is not surprising therefore if we tell ourselves that all revelatory experience is foolishness, so much so that man sees himself increasingly as nothing but an 'energy slave' or a cipher on the face of a moral and spiritual void. And as the knowledge of his own disorientation cannot be handled within the framework of so-called normality, he turns more and more to his brave world of machines. And through the power

of his machines he acts out the uncomprehended tragedy of man's inner disruption. Yet it was the Ancient Chinese Sage, Huang Tzu, who proposed some 2500 years ago that dependence even on a simple kind of machine causes man to become uncertain of his own inner impulses; and further, the result may lead him to forget how to master his own world.

So we have learned instead how to master our machines, because machines do not serve us unless we service them, but in the process we have had to adjust our human organization to our equipment. We tend to get what the machine can best give us rather than what is most desirable.

For the rest ... I have tried to write this book as an inwardly conceived and inwardly coherent work of fiction that isn't exactly fiction, and only those who read it as a novel will discover its real meaning. I hope that those who are prepared to read the book in this spirit will catch a glimpse, not so much of a utopia possible in theory, but rather of an attitude of mind capable of attainment in practice, in which all problems of modern technological existence will appear to be solved, that irreconcilable contradictions will pass away, and a newer and fuller significance of individual human existence will be revealed. In this connection, I can do no better than to refer the reader to Aldous Huxley's last novel, *Island* (1962), which is a very imaginative effort to protect a way of life based in nature, that is lived organically as a flowing growing process.

According to his brother, Sir Julian Huxley, Aldous took LSD eleven times, gaining thereby 'new extensions of his perception of beauty and transcendence'. Huxley believed that from LSD the individual could achieve what the poet Cowper called 'a closer walk with God'.

For myself, I believe I have investigated the phenomenon LSD—these words!—as much towards this same spiritual end as my intelligence and faculties permitted me to go. And perhaps the long, arduous, oppressive decade I passed through came to benefit at least one creative effort.

And how do I now think of LSD *et al.*?—as certain truths about the nature of my inner self came to be manifest in my conscious mind, my interest in psychedelics began to wane proportionately, so that today I do not believe that LSD can help me towards self-realisation. It had never been more than preliminary, one may say, a pretext to me to explore inwardness and unfamiliar mental states for whatever they might reveal. But LSD has nothing more to give me. And I am therefore determined to return to the world, and in time, to integrate myself with it. In relation to any religious beliefs I now hold, I am a confessed Franciscan, though I freely admit that I have a very long way to go before I shall be able to express this outwardly—with my entire being—the love Saint Francis of Assisi showed was for all living creatures, and in respect to love of this kind, I must to this extent be regarded as clumsy. Yet in Saint Francis evolved Love of the very highest order for his delicate and feminine sensibility offered Love a unique possibility of manifestation. And thus, in the light of this knowledge, I can no longer take my psychedelic trips seriously. I know that many readers, and by no means the worst among them, would disapprove of such measures as taking LSD; one should be strong enough, they say, to exist by faith without the aid of drugs. Yes! One should be, but what if one is too weak? And the impulse which now drives me back into the world is precisely the same as that which drives so many into monasteries or to keep the offices of prayer—the desire for self-realisation.

St. Mary at the Cross, Glasshampton, Worcester.