

**EYES OF THE WORLD:
A SECOND ANTHOLOGY OF WRITINGS
ABOUT PSYCHEDELICS**

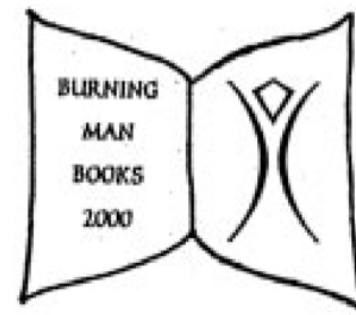


**Edited by
Ray Soulard, Jr.**

Eyes of the World:

A Second Anthology of Writings about Psychedelics

Edited by
Ray Soulard, Jr.



Number ten

*This volume is dedicated to those people in the world who live a
life of risk for bliss.*

*“Psychedelics were probably the single most significant experience in my
life. Otherwise I think I would be going along believing that this visible
reality here is all that there is. Psychedelics didn’t give me any answers.
What I have are a lot of questions. One thing I’m certain of: the mind is an
incredible thing and there are levels of organizations of consciousness that
are way beyond what people are fooling with in day to day reality . . . There
was a me before psychedelics and a me after psychedelics, that’s the best I
can say.”*

—Jerry Garcia

*“Wake up to find out that you are the eyes of the world
But the heart has its beaches, its homeland and thoughts of its own
Wake now discover that you are the song that the morning brings
But the heart has its seasons, its evenings and songs of its own”*

—Jerry Garcia & Robert Hunter

Eyes of the World:
A Second Anthology of Writings about Psychedelics

Copyright information indicated at the beginning
of each piece

Burning Man Books is a Special Projects Division
imprint of Scriptor Press, 32 Newman Rd. #2,
Malden, Massachusetts 02148
cenacle@mindspring.com
members.theglobe.com/cenacle

The Psychedelic Experience: *The Basic Trusts and Beliefs*

**Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner,
& Richard Alpert**

from The Psychedelic Experience

A manual based on the Tibetan Book of the Dead

©1964 by Timothy Leary, Ralph Metzner, & Richard Alpert

YOU MUST BE READY to accept the possibility that there is a limitless range of awareness for which we now have no words; that awareness can expand beyond range of your ego, your self, your familiar identity, beyond everything you have learned, beyond your notions of space and time, beyond the differences which usually separate people from each other and from the world around them.

You must remember that throughout human history, millions have made this voyage. A few (whom we call mystics, saints or buddhas) have made this experience endure and have communicated it to their fellow men. You must remember, too, that the experience is safe (at the very worst, you will end up the same person who entered the experience), and that all of the dangers which you have feared are unnecessary productions of your mind. Whether you experience heaven or hell, remember that it is your mind which creates them. Avoid grasping the one or fleeing the other. Avoid imposing the ego game on the experience.

You must try to maintain faith and trust in the potentiality of your own brain and the billion-year-old life process. With your ego left behind you, the brain can't go wrong.

Try to keep the memory of a trusted friend or a respected person whose name can serve as a guide and protection.

Trust your divinity, trust your brain, trust your companions.

Whenever in doubt, turn off your mind, relax, float downstream.

Culture and the Individual

Aldous Huxley

©1963 by Aldous Huxley

BETWEEN CULTURE and the individual the relationship is, and always has been, strangely ambivalent. We are at once the beneficiaries of our culture and its victims. Without culture, and without that precondition of all culture, language, man would be no more than another species of baboon. It is to language and culture that we owe our humanity. And “What a piece of work is a man!” says Hamlet: “How noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! . . . in action how like an angel! in apprehension, how like a god!” But, alas, in the intervals of being noble, rational and potentially infinite,

*man, proud man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he is most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.*

Genius and angry ape, player of fantastic tricks and godlike reasoner—in all these roles individuals are the products of a language and a culture. Working on the twelve or thirteen billion neurons of a human brain, language and culture have given us law, science, ethics, philosophy; have made possible all the achievements of talent and of sanctity. They have also given us fanaticism, superstition and dogmatic bumptiousness; nationalistic idolatry and mass murder in the name of God; rabble-rousing propaganda and organized lying. And, along with the salt of the earth, they have given us, generation after generation, countless millions of hypnotized conformists, the predestined victims of power-hungry rulers who are themselves the victims of all that is most senseless and inhuman in their cultural tradition.

Thanks to language and culture, human behavior can be

incomparably more intelligent, more original, creative and flexible than the behavior of animals, whose brains are too small to accommodate the number of neurons necessary for the invention of language and the transmission of accumulated knowledge. But, thanks again to language and culture, human beings often behave with a stupidity, a lack of realism, a total inappropriateness, of which animals are incapable.

Trobriland Islander or Bostonian, Sicilian Catholic or Japanese Buddhist, each of us is born into some culture and passes his life within its confines. Between every human consciousness and the rest of the world stands an invisible fence, a network of traditional thinking-and-feeling patterns, of secondhand notions that have turned into axioms, of ancient slogans revered as divine revelations. What we see through the meshes of this net is never, of course, the unknowable “thing in itself.” It is not even, in most cases, the thing as it impinges upon our senses and as our organism spontaneously reacts to it. What we ordinarily take in and respond to is a curious mixture of immediate experience with culturally conditioned symbol, of sense impressions with preconceived ideas about the nature of things. And by most people the symbolic elements in this cocktail of awareness are felt to be more important than the elements contributed by immediate experience. Inevitably so, for, to those who accept their culture totally and uncritically, words in the familiar language do not stand (however inadequately) for things. On the contrary, things stand for familiar words. Each unique event of their ongoing life is instantly and automatically classified as yet another concrete illustration of one of the verbalized, culture-hallowed abstractions drummed into their heads by childhood conditioning.

It goes without saying that many of the ideas handed down to us by the transmitters of culture are eminently sensible and realistic. (If they were not, the human species would now be extinct.) But, along with these useful concepts, every culture hands down a stock of unrealistic notions, some of which never made any sense, while others may once have possessed survival value, but have now, in the changed and changing circumstances of ongoing history, become completely irrelevant. Since human beings respond to symbols as promptly and unequivocally as they respond to the stimuli of unmediated experience, and since most of them naively

believe that culture-hallowed words about things are as real as, or even realer than their perceptions of the things themselves, these outdated or intrinsically nonsensical notions do enormous harm. Thanks to the realistic ideas handed down by culture, mankind has survived and, in certain fields, progresses. But thanks to the pernicious nonsense drummed into every individual in the course of his acculturation, mankind, though surviving and progressing, has always been in trouble. History is the record, among other things, of the fantastic and generally fiendish tricks played upon itself by culture-maddened humanity. And the hideous game goes on.

What can, and what should, the individual do to improve his ironically equivocal relationship with the culture in which he finds himself embedded? How can he continue to enjoy the benefits of culture without, at the same time, being stupefied or frenziedly intoxicated by its poisons? How can he become discriminatingly acculturated, rejecting what is silly or downright evil in his conditioning, and holding fast to that which makes for humane and intelligent behavior?

A culture cannot be discriminatingly accepted, much less be modified, except by persons who have seen through it—by persons who have cut holes in the confining stockade of verbalized symbols and so are able to look at the world and, by reflection, at themselves in a new and relatively unprejudiced way. Such persons are not merely born; they must also be made. But how?

In the field of formal education, what the would-be hole cutter needs is knowledge. Knowledge of the past and present history of cultures in all their fantastic variety, and knowledge about the nature and limitations, the uses and abuses, of language. A man who knows that there have been many cultures, and that each culture claims to be the best and truest of all, will find it hard to take too seriously the boastings and dogmatizings of his own tradition. Similarly, a man who knows how symbols are related to experience, and who practices the kind of linguistic self-control taught by the exponents of General Semantics, is unlikely to take too seriously the absurd or dangerous nonsense that, within every culture, passes for philosophy, practical wisdom and political argument. As a preparation for hole cutting, this kind of intellectual education is certainly valuable, but no less certainly

insufficient. Training on the verbal level needs to be supplemented by training in wordless experiencing. We must learn how to be mentally silent, must cultivate the art of pure receptivity.

To be silently receptive—how childishly simple that seems! But in fact, as we very soon discover, how difficult! The universe in which men pass their lives is the creation of what Indian philosophy calls *Nama-Rupa*, Name and Form. Reality is a continuum, a fathomlessly mysterious and infinite Something, whose outward aspect is what we call Matter and whose inwardness is what we call Mind. Language is a device for taking the mystery out of Reality and making it amenable to human comprehension and manipulation. Acculturated man breaks up the continuum, attaches labels to a few of the fragments, projects the labels into the outside world and thus creates for himself an all-too-human universe of separate objects, each of which is merely the embodiment of a name, a particular illustration of some traditional abstraction. What we perceive takes on the pattern of the conceptual lattice through which it has been filtered. Pure receptivity is difficult because man's normal waking consciousness is always culturally conditioned. But normal waking consciousness, as William James pointed out many years ago, "is but one type of consciousness, while 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 forms of consciousness disregarded."

Like the culture by which it is conditioned, normal waking consciousness is at once our best friend and a most dangerous enemy. It helps us to survive and make progress; but at the same time it prevents us from actualizing some of our most valuable potentialities and, on occasion, gets us into all kinds of trouble. To become fully human, man, proud man, the player of fantastic tricks, must learn to get out of his own way: only then will his infinite faculties and angelic apprehension get a chance of coming to the surface. In Blake's words, we must "cleanse the doors of perception"; for when the doors of perception are cleansed,

“everything appears to man as it is—infinite.” To normal waking consciousness things are the strictly finite and insulated embodiments of verbal labels. How can we break the habit of automatically imposing our prejudices and the memory of culture-hallowed words upon immediate experience? Answer: by the practice of pure receptivity and mental silence. These will cleanse the doors of perception and, in the process, make possible the emergence of other than normal forms of consciousness—esthetic consciousness, visionary consciousness, mystical consciousness. Thanks to culture we are the heirs to vast accumulations of knowledge, to a priceless treasure of logical and scientific method, to thousands upon thousands of useful pieces of technological and organizational know-how. But the human mind-body possesses other sources of information, makes use of other types of reasoning, is gifted with an intrinsic wisdom that is independent of cultural conditioning.

Wordsworth writes that “our meddling intellect [that part of the mind which uses language to take the mystery out of Reality] mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things: we murder to dissect.” Needless to say, we cannot get along without our meddling intellect. Verbalized conceptual thinking is indispensable. But even when they are used well, verbalized concepts mis-shape “the beauteous forms of things.” And when (as happens so often) they are used badly, they mis-shape our lives by rationalizing ancient stupidities, by instigating mass murder, persecution and the playing of all the other fantastically ugly tricks that make the angels weep. Wise nonverbal passiveness is an antidote to unwise verbal activity and a necessary corrective to wise verbal activity. Verbalized concepts about experience need to be supplemented by direct, unmediated acquaintance with events as they present themselves to us.

It is the old story of the letter and the spirit. The letter is necessary, but must never be taken too seriously, for, divorced from the spirit, it cramps and finally kills. As for the spirit, it “bloweth where it listeth” and, if we fail to consult the best cultural charts, we may be blown off our course and suffer shipwreck. At present most of us make the worst of both worlds. Ignoring the freely blowing winds of the spirit and relying on cultural maps which may be centuries out-of-date, we rush full speed ahead under the

high-pressure steam of our own overweening self-confidence. The tickets we have sold ourselves assure us that our destination is some port in the Islands of the Blest. In fact it turns out, more often than not, to be Devil’s Island.

Self-education on the nonverbal level is as old as civilization. “Be still and know that I am God”—for the visionaries and mystics of every time and every place, this has been the first and greatest of the commandments. Poets listen to their Muse and in the same way the visionary and the mystic wait upon inspiration in a state of wise passiveness, of dynamic vacuity. In the Western tradition this state is called “the prayer of simple regard.” At the other end of the world it is described in terms that are psychological rather than theistic. In mental silence we “look into our own Self-Nature,” we “hold fast to the Not-Thought which lies in thought,” we “become that which essentially we have always been.” By wise activity we can acquire useful analytical knowledge about the world, knowledge that can be communicated by means of verbal symbols. In the state of wise passiveness we make possible the emergence of forms of consciousness other than the utilitarian consciousness of normal waking life. Useful analytical knowledge about the world is replaced by some kind of biologically inessential but spiritually enlightening acquaintance with the world. For example, there can be direct esthetic acquaintance with the world as beauty. Or there can be direct acquaintance with the intrinsic strangeness of existence, its wild implausibility. And finally there can be direct acquaintance with the world’s unity. This immediate mystical experience of being at one with the fundamental Oneness that manifests itself in the infinite diversity of things and minds, can never be adequately expressed in words. Like visionary experience, the experience of the mystic can be talked about only from the outside. Verbal symbols can never convey its inwardness.

It is through mental silence and the practice of wise passiveness that artists, visionaries and mystics have made themselves ready for the immediate experience of the world as beauty, as mystery and as unity. But silence and wise passiveness are not the only roads leading out of the all-too-human universe created by normal, culture-conditioned consciousness. In *Expostulation and Reply*, Wordsworth’s bookish friend, Matthew,

reproaches the poet because

*You look round on your Mother Earth,
As if she for no purpose bore you;
As if you were her first-born birth,
And none have lived before you!*

From the point of view of normal waking consciousness, this is sheer intellectual delinquency. But it is what the artist, the visionary and the mystic must do and, in fact, have always done. "Look at a person, a landscape, any common object, as though you were seeing it for the first time." This is one of the exercises in immediate, un verbalized awareness prescribed in the ancient texts of Tantric Buddhism. Artists, visionaries and mystics refuse to be enslaved to the culture-conditioned habits of feeling, thought and action which their society regards as right and natural. Whenever this seems desirable, they deliberately refrain from projecting upon reality those hallowed word patterns with which all human minds are so copiously stocked. They know as well as anyone else that culture and the language in which any given culture is rooted, are absolutely necessary and that, without them, the individual would not be human. But more vividly than the rest of mankind they also know that, to be fully human, the individual must learn to decondition himself, must be able to cut holes in the fence of verbalized symbols that hems him in.

In the exploration of the vast and mysterious world of human potentialities the great artists, visionaries and mystics have been trailblazing pioneers. But where they have been, others can follow. Potentially, all of us are "infinite in faculties and like gods in apprehension." Modes of consciousness different from normal waking consciousness are within the reach of anyone who knows how to apply the necessary stimuli. The universe in which a human being lives can be transfigured into a new creation. We have only to cut a hole in the fence and look around us with what the philosopher, Plotinus, describes as "that other kind of seeing, which everyone has but few make use of."

Within our current systems of education, training on the nonverbal level is meager in quantity and poor in quality.

Moreover, its purpose, which is simply to help its recipients to be more "like gods in apprehension," is neither clearly stated nor consistently pursued. We could and, most emphatically, we should do better in this very important field than we are doing now. The practical wisdom of earlier civilizations and the findings of adventurous spirits within our own tradition and in our own time are freely available. With their aid a curriculum and a methodology of nonverbal training could be worked out without much difficulty. Unhappily most persons in authority have a vested interest in the maintenance of cultural fences. They frown upon hole cutting as subversive and dismiss Plotinus' "other kind of seeing" as a symptom of mental derangement. If an effective system of nonverbal education could be worked out, would the authorities allow it to be widely applied? It is an open question.

From the nonverbal world of culturally uncontaminated consciousness we pass to the subverbal world of physiology and biochemistry. A human being is a temperament and a product of cultural conditioning; he is also, and primarily, an extremely complex and delicate biochemical system, whose inwardness, as the system changes from one state of equilibrium to another, is changing consciousness. It is because each one of us is a biochemical system that (according to Housman)

*Malt does more than Milton can
To justify God's ways to man.*

Beer achieves its theological triumphs because, in William James' words, "Drunkenness is the great exciter of the Yes function in man." And he adds that "It is part of the deeper mystery and tragedy of life that whiffs and gleams of something that we immediately recognize as excellent should be vouchsafed to so many of us only in the fleeting earlier phases of what, in its totality, is so degrading a poisoning." The tree is known by its fruits, and the fruits of too much reliance upon ethyl alcohol as an exciter of the Yes function are bitter indeed. No less bitter are the fruits of reliance upon such habit-forming sedatives, hallucinogens and mood elevators as opium and its derivatives, as cocaine (once so blithely recommended to his friends and patients by Dr. Freud), as the barbiturates and amphetamine. But in recent years the

pharmacologists have extracted or synthesized several compounds that powerfully affect the mind without doing any harm to the body, either at the time of ingestion or, through addiction, later on. Through these new psychedelics, the subject's normal waking consciousness may be modified in many different ways. It is as though, for each individual, his deeper self decides which kind of experience will be most advantageous. Having decided, it makes use of the drug's mind-changing powers to give the person what he needs. Thus, if it would be good for him to have deeply buried memories uncovered, deeply buried memories will duly be uncovered. In cases where this is of no great importance, something else will happen. Normal waking consciousness may be replaced by aesthetic consciousness, and the world will be perceived in all its unimaginable beauty, all the blazing intensity of its "thereness." And aesthetic consciousness may modulate into visionary consciousness. Thanks to yet another kind of seeing, the world will now reveal itself as not only unimaginably beautiful, but also fathomlessly mysterious—as a multitudinous abyss of possibility forever actualizing itself into unprecedented forms. New insights into a new, transfigured world of givenness, new combinations of thought and fantasy—the stream of novelty pours through the world in a torrent, whose every drop is charged with meaning. There are the symbols whose meaning lies outside themselves in the given facts of visionary experience, and there are these given facts which signify only themselves. But "only themselves" is also "no less than the divine ground of all being." "Nothing but this" is at the same time "the Suchness of all." And now the aesthetic and the visionary consciousness deepen into mystical consciousness. The world is now seen as an infinite diversity that is yet a unity, and the beholder experiences himself as being at one with the infinite Oneness that manifests itself, totally present, at every point of space, at every instant in the flux of perpetual perishing and perpetual renewal. Our normal word-conditioned consciousness creates a universe of sharp distinctions, black and white, this and that, me and you and it. In the mystical consciousness of being at one with infinite Oneness, there is a reconciliation of opposites, a perception of the Not-Particular in particulars, a transcending of our ingrained subject-object relationships with things and persons; there is an immediate

experience of our solidarity with all being and a kind of organic conviction that in spite of the inscrutabilities of fate, in spite of our own dark stupidities and deliberate malevolence, yes, in spite of all that is so manifestly wrong with the world, it is yet, in some profound, paradoxical and entirely inexpressible way, All Right. For normal waking consciousness, the phrase, "God is Love," is no more than a piece of wishful positive thinking. For the mystical consciousness, it is a self-evident truth.

Unprecedentedly rapid technological and demographic changes are steadily increasing the dangers by which we are surrounded, and at the same time are steadily diminishing the relevance of the traditional feeling-and-behavior-patterns imposed upon all individuals, rulers and ruled alike, by their culture. Always desirable, widespread training in the art of cutting holes in cultural fences is now the most urgent of necessities. Can such a training be speeded up and made more effective by a judicious use of the physically harmless psychedelics now available? On the basis of personal experience and the published evidence, I believe that it can. In my utopian fantasy, *Island*, I speculated in fictional terms about the ways in which a substance akin to psilocybin could be used to potentiate the nonverbal education of adolescents and to remind adults that the real world is very different from the misshapen universe they have created for themselves by means of their culture-conditioned prejudices. "Having Fun with Fungi"—that was how one waggish reviewer dismissed the matter. But which is better: to have Fun with Fungi or to have Idiocy with Ideology, to have Wars because of Words, to have Tomorrow's Misdeeds out of Yesterday's Miscreeds?

How should the psychedelics be administered? Under what circumstances, with what kind of preparation and follow-up? These are questions that must be answered empirically, by large-scale experiment. Man's collective mind has a high degree of viscosity and flows from one position to another with the reluctant deliberation of an ebbing tide of sludge. But in a world of explosive population increase, of headlong technological advance and of militant nationalism, the time at our disposal is strictly limited. We must discover, and discover very soon, new energy sources for overcoming our society's psychological inertia, better solvents for liquefying the sludgy stickiness of an anachronistic state of mind.

On the verbal level an education in the nature and limitations, the uses and abuses of language; on the wordless level an education in mental silence and pure receptivity; and finally, through the use of harmless psychedelics, a course of chemically triggered conversion experiences or ecstasies—these, I believe, will provide all the sources of mental energy, all the solvents of conceptual sludge, that an individual requires. With their aid, he should be able to adapt himself selectively to his culture, rejecting its evils, stupidities and irrelevances, gratefully accepting all its treasures of accumulated knowledge, of rationality, human-heartedness and practical wisdom. If the number of such individuals is sufficiently great, if their quality is sufficiently high, they may be able to pass from discriminating acceptance of their culture to discriminating change and reform. Is this a hopefully utopian dream? Experiment can give us the answer, for the dream is pragmatic; the utopian hypotheses can be tested empirically. And in these oppressive times a little hope is surely no unwelcome visitant.

True Hallucinations

Terence McKenna

from *True Hallucinations: Being an Account of the Author's Extraordinary Adventures in the Devil's Paradise*
©1993 by Terence McKenna

Ahead of us lies the future, where we can expect the ingression of the alternative dimension to intensify. It is therefore important for us to have a sense of the powers in that Other world and their shifting agencies. In a traditional society, our exploration of these matters would be firmly imbedded in the extant shamanic mythos concerning these forces. Techniques tried and true would be available to fortify our psychic constitution. Since we are members of a profane society whose relation to the unconscious is one of estrangement, we have no such consolation. No dispelling ritual or words of proven self-empowerment. By reason and intuition we must attempt to conquer the fears that attend journeys into the unknown. But reason and intuition need data with which to construct maps of reality. If we outdistance the inflow of fact we move beyond the safety zone of the conjuring rod of intuition and reason. For these reasons we move slowly and steadily. We are human factors in a multi-variable equation where the shift of unseen parameters can trigger large perturbations and resonances of unexpected types

The history of consciousness is the halting exploration of the once irrational images and processes met in dreams and trace. Such images become concepts and discoveries as information flows through the multiple-continuum of being seeking equilibrium, yet paradoxically carrying everywhere images of ways the flow towards entropy was locally reversed by this being or that society or phenomenon. We are immersed in a holographic ocean of places and ideas. We can understand this to whatever depth we are able. The ocean of images and the intricacy of their connections is infinite. It is perhaps why great genius preceeds by apparent leaps. Because the revolutionary idea which inspires the genius comes upon one complete, entire by itself, from the ocean of mind.

History is the story of the search for the intuitive leap that will reveal the very mechanism of that other dimension. The need for such a leap by humanity will grow as we exhaust complexity in all realms save the microphysical and the psychological. My own method has been immersion in the images and self-examination of the phenomenon of tryptamine hallucinogenesis. This means taking the *Stropharia psilocybe* and pondering just what this all may mean. With confidence that as more people come to share this experience time will deepen our understanding, if not answer all questions. For psilocybin argues that hallucinogens are windows into higher dimensions. That even as a cone can yield circle, ellipse or parabola to an act of two-dimensional sectioning and yet remain intrinsically a cone, so reality is something that changes according to the angle of regarding. It argues that human beings are many forms over vast scales of time, that all life is unified at some level, and all intelligence in the universe are but facets of the mystery called humanness. In probing the Other we shall always come back with images of ourselves. In probing ourselves we shall return with images of the Other. In the phenomenon of being itself no less than in the phenomenon of the UFO encounters we are merely privileged observers of a relationship between what is naively called the world and the transpersonal portion of the human psyche. How this relationship came to be, and what its limitations are, we cannot know until we gain access to the transpersonal and atemporal part of the psyche. Of what this consists we do not know and no hypothesis can be ruled out. My hunch is that if we could really comprehend death then we could understand the UFO. But that neither can be understood unless they are looked at in light of the question, what is humanness? I believe that the transpersonal component of the human psyche is not distinct from matter and that therefore it can literally do anything. It is not subject to the will of any individual. It has a will and an understanding that is orders of magnitude more sophisticated than any one of the individuals who compose it as cells compose a body. It has a plan, glimpsed by individuals only as vision or religious hierophany. Nevertheless, the plan is unfolding. There will be many more UFO sightings, many more close contacts. Our belief systems are undergoing accelerated evolution via increased input from the other. Somewhere ahead of us there is a critical barrier where we will at

last have enough data to obtain an integrating insight into the riddle of humanity's relation to the UFO. I believe that as this happens the childhood of our species will pass away and when this is done we will be free to use the staggering understanding that humankind and the UFO are one.

LSD Psychotherapy

Dr. Stanislav Grof

from *LSD Psychotherapy*
©1980, 1994 by Stanislav Grof

LSD and other psychedelics function more or less as nonspecific catalysts and amplifiers of the psyche. This is reflected in the name given by Humphrey Osmond to this group of substances; the Greek word “psychedelic” translates literally as mind-manifesting.” In the dosages used in human experimentation, the classical psychedelics, such as LSD, psilocybin, and mescaline, do not have any specific pharmacological effects. They increase the energetic niveau in the psyche and the body which leads to manifestation of otherwise latent psychological processes.

The content and nature of the experiences that these substances induce are thus not artificial products of their pharmacological interaction with the brain (“toxic psychoses”), but authentic expressions of the psyche revealing its functioning on levels ordinarily not available for observation and study. A person who has taken LSD does not have an “LSD experience,” but takes a journey into deep recesses of his or her own psyche. When this substance is given in the same dosage and under comparable circumstances to a large number of individuals, each of them will have a different experience reflecting the specificities of his or her psyche. In addition, serial sessions of the same person will vary in their content and show a characteristic progression.

For this reason, it does not seem to be an exaggeration to say that psychedelics, used responsibly and with proper caution, would be for psychiatry what the microscope is for biology and medicine or the telescope is for astronomy. These tools make it possible to study important processes that under normal circumstances are not available for direct observation. I have previously contended] that the best way of understanding LSD is to see it as an unspecific amplifier of psychological processes. If I had any remaining doubts about this point of view, they have been all but dispelled by our observations from Holotropic Breathwork.

This approach is a powerful method of therapy and self-exploration that my wife Christina and I have developed over the last eighteen years and have used in workshops and seminars all over the world. It combines extremely simple nonpharmacological means, such as accelerated breathing, evocative music, and a system of body interventions aimed at release of pent-up emotions and blocked physical energies. As I have described in *The Adventure of Self-Discovery*, a book specifically discussing the theory and practice of Holotropic Breathwork, the spectrum of the experiences evoked by this procedure is practically identical with that of psychedelic sessions.

Experiences occurring in psychedelic and holotropic sessions cannot be described in terms of the narrow and superficial conceptual model used in academic psychiatry and psychology, which is limited to biology, postnatal biography, and the Freudian individual unconscious. Deep experiential work requires a vastly extended cartography of the psyche that includes important domains uncharted by traditional science. My own version of such a model . . . includes two additional levels of the psyche, for which I use the terms *perinatal* and *transpersonal*.

The phenomena originating on the perinatal and transpersonal levels of the psyche include sequences of psychological death and rebirth, encounters with archetypal beings, visits to mythological realms of various cultures, past incarnation memories, extrasensory perception, episodes of out-of-body states, experiences of cosmic consciousness research. These have to be considered to be natural and normal manifestations of the deeper dynamics of the human psyche.

They have been repeatedly described in the context of various shamanic procedures, rites of passage, aboriginal healing ceremonies, and mysteries of death and rebirth, as well as Eastern spiritual philosophies and mystical traditions of all ages. For this reason, any serious effort to understand spirituality and religion requires recognition of the perinatal and transpersonal dimensions of the psyche. Attempts to interpret any of these phenomena in the context of the narrow and superficial model of the psyche currently used by Newtonian-Cartesian science necessarily leads to serious distortions and to pathologization of the entire spiritual history of humanity.

From this perspective, the founders of the great religions of the world, as well as their prophets, saints, and eminent teachers, all of whom had visionary experiences, are labeled as psychotics. Shamans are diagnosed as ambulant schizophrenics, hysterics, or epileptics. Religion and spirituality are interpreted as resulting from superstition, lack of education, infantile regression to primitive and material thinking, or mental disease. Similar pathological criteria are applied to the ritual and spiritual life of pre-industrial cultures that cannot be adequately understood and makes no sense to Western scientists with their limited model of the human psyche.

Among additional phenomena that elude the reductionist interpretations of Western materialistic science are the experiences in near-death situations, reports about UFO abductions, various parapsychological occurrences, as well as experiences and behaviors observed in certain forms of hypnosis and various powerful experiential psychotherapies other than Holotropic Breathwork. Experiences induced by biofeedback training, sensory deprivation and overload, different electronic and kinesthetic devices, and lucid dreaming are additional important examples.

The same can be said about a large subgroup of states that contemporary psychiatry diagnoses and treats as functional psychoses, meaning mental diseases of unknown etiology. The understanding of the psyche that includes the perinatal and transpersonal levels shows these conditions in an entirely new light as psychospiritual crises or “spiritual emergencies.” If they are properly understood and the individuals engaged in this process are encouraged to surrender to their experiences, these states can result in emotional and psychosomatic healing, deep personality transformation, and consciousness evolution.

[This] extended cartography of the psyche makes it possible to account for many phenomena that traditional psychiatry and psychology have to deny, pathologize, or explain in a superficial and inadequate way. However, [recent] findings offer much more than a revised and vastly expanded theoretical model of the psyche. Many of the new principles discovered during psychedelic research are of a highly practical nature and are directly applicable to therapeutic situations without the use of psychoactive substances. Here belongs a new and revolutionary understanding

of the nature and architecture of emotional and psychosomatic disorders, including certain forms of psychoses, effective mechanisms of healing and transformation, therapeutic techniques, and strategies of self-exploration.

The future implications of psychedelic research thus fall into two different categories. The first of these involves the destiny of psychedelic therapy per se, the other the theoretical and practical importance of the new discoveries about the nature of the psyche and of consciousness. Whether or not psychedelics will return into psychiatry and will again become part of the therapeutic armamentarium is a complex question. Most likely what will have the decisive influence will not be the results of scientific research, but a variety of political, legal, economic, and mass-psychological factors.

After having personally conducted over the years more than four thousand psychedelic sessions, I have developed great awe and respect for these substances and their enormous positive, as well as negative potential. They are powerful tools and like any tool they can be used skillfully, ineptly, and destructively. The question whether LSD is a phenomenal medicine or a devil’s drug makes as little sense as a similar question asked about the positive or negative potential of a knife. Naturally, we will get a very different picture from a surgeon who bases his or her judgment on successful operations and from the police chief who investigates murders with knives. Similarly, the image of LSD will vary whether we focus on the results of responsible clinical or spiritual use, naive and careless mass self-experimentation of the young generation, or deliberately destructive experiments of the army or the CIA.

The results of the administration of psychedelics are critically influenced by the factors of set and setting. Until this is clearly understood, there is no hope for rational decisions in regard to psychedelic drug policies. I believe that psychedelics can be used in such a way that the benefits by far outweigh the possible risks. This has been amply proven by centuries of safe ritual and spiritual use of psychedelics by generations of shamans, individual healers, and entire aboriginal cultures. However, the Western industrial civilization has so far abused all its discoveries and there is not much hope that psychedelics will make an exception, unless we rise as a group to a higher level of consciousness and emotional

maturity.

On the positive side, it can be said that Western society is at present much better equipped to assimilate psychedelics than it was in the 1960s. At the time when psychiatrists and psychologists started to experiment with LSD, the official image of psychotherapy was that of civilized face-to-face discussions or disciplined free-associating on the couch. Intense emotions and active behavior were referred to as “acting-out” and were seen as violations of basic therapeutic rules. In contrast, psychedelic sessions were associated with dramatic emotions, psychomotor excitement, and vivid perceptual changes.

They thus seemed to be closer to states that psychiatrists considered to be pathological and tried to suppress by all means than to conditions to which one would attribute therapeutic potential. This was reflected in the terms “hallucinogens” and “experimental psychoses” used initially for psychedelics and the states induced by them. In any case, psychedelic sessions resembled more scenes from anthropological movies about shamanic rituals of “primitive” cultures and wild aboriginal ceremonies than those from a psychoanalyst’s office.

In addition, many of the experiences and observations from psychedelic sessions seemed to seriously challenge the image of the human psyche and of the universe developed by Newtonian-Cartesian science and considered to be accurate and definitive descriptions of “objective reality.” Psychedelic subjects reported experiential identification with other people, animals, and various aspects of nature during which they gained access to new information about areas about which they previously had no intellectual knowledge. The same was true about experiential excursions into the lives of their human and animal ancestors, as well as racial, collective, and karmic memories.

On occasion, this new information was drawn from experiences involving archetypal beings and mythological realms of different cultures in the world. In out-of-body experiences, experimental subjects often witnessed and accurately described remote events occurring in locations that were outside of the range of their senses. None of these happenings were considered possible in the context of traditional materialistic science and yet, in psychedelic sessions, they were observed on a daily basis. This

naturally caused deep conceptual turmoil and confusion in the minds of conventionally trained experimenters. Under these circumstances, many professionals chose to stay away from this area to preserve their scientific world-view and to protect their common sense and sanity.

The last three decades brought many revolutionary changes that have profoundly influenced the climate in the world of psychotherapy. Humanistic and transpersonal psychologies have developed powerful experiential techniques that emphasize deep regression, direct expression of intense emotions, and bodywork leading to release of physical energies. The inner experiences and outer manifestations, as well as therapeutic strategies, in these therapies bear a great similarity to those observed in psychedelic sessions. As I mentioned earlier in relation to Holotropic Breathwork, these nondrug approaches involve a similar spectrum of experiences, as well as comparable conceptual challenges. As a result of it, for therapists practicing along these lines, the introduction of psychedelics would represent the next logical step rather than dramatic change in their practice.

Moreover, the Newtonian-Cartesian thinking in science that in the 1960s enjoyed great authority and popularity has been progressively undermined by astonishing developments in a variety of disciplines. This has happened to such an extent that an increasing number of scientists feel an urgent need for an entirely different world-view, a new scientific paradigm. Philosophical implications of quantum-relativistic physics, David Bohm’s theory of holomovement, Karl Pribram’s holographic theory of the brain, Ilya Prigogine’s theory of dissipative structures, Rupert Sheldrake’s theory of morphogenetic fields, and Gregory Bateson’s brilliant anthropology and psychology, are just a few eminent examples of this development. It is very encouraging that all these new developments that are in irreconcilable conflict with traditional science seem to be compatible with the findings of modern consciousness research and with transpersonal psychology.

From a practical point of view, it is important to mention that legal experimentation with psychedelics has been resumed in Switzerland and several new research projects have recently been approved in the United States. In spite of all these encouraging developments, the future of psychedelic therapy as such remains

uncertain. However, the situation is very different in regard to its revolutionary findings concerning the nature of the psyche and human consciousness; their relevance for psychiatry and psychology is independent from the fate of this therapeutic modality. Since it has become clear that the phenomena involved represent genuine manifestations of the psyche that occur in many situations where no psychoactive substances are involved, they have to be taken into consideration in any serious attempt to understand the human psyche.

If the experiences observed in psychedelic sessions were toxic artifacts, professionals would have a reasonable excuse for their disinterest in this area. One could be an expert in the field without having knowledge about the pharmacological effects of an exotic group of psychoactive substances. However, ignoring or misinterpreting observations from a large category of situations, including ancient and Oriental spiritual practices, trance states in aboriginal rituals, near-death experiences, various forms of nonpharmacological experiential psychotherapies, and psychospiritual crises is a different matter. Such an approach reflects rigid adherence to a superficial and inadequate model of the psyche and resembles more religious fundamentalism than good science.

The critical issue here is the ontological status of non-ordinary states of consciousness—whether we see them as pathological conditions that should be indiscriminately suppressed or variable alternatives to our everyday states of consciousness that can contribute to our understanding of the psyche and have a great therapeutic potential. Of all the human groups, the Western industrial civilization is the only one that has taken the former position. All the ancient and pre-industrial societies have held non-ordinary states of consciousness in high esteem and used them for a variety of purposes—diagnosing and healing diseases, ritual, spiritual, and religious activity, cultivation of extrasensory perception, and artistic inspiration. These cultures have spent much time and energy developing various techniques of inducing these states, including a wide range of nonpharmacological approaches and psychedelic plants.

Michael Harner, a well-known anthropologist who has also undergone personal shamanic initiation during his field work in

the Amazon, describes that from his dual perspective Western psychology and psychiatry are seriously biased in two important ways. They are *ethnocentric*, which means that they consider their own idiosyncratic point of view to be superior to that of any other cultural group and label as pathological any activities that they cannot understand in their own framework. Harner's name for the second serious conceptual distortion is *cognicentric*, although a better term for it might be *pragmacentric*. What he means by it is that theoretical speculations in Western academic psychology and psychiatry are based exclusively on experiences and observations made in the ordinary states of consciousness (with the possible exception of dreams). The evidence from the study of non-ordinary states of any kind are systematically ignored or pathologized.

Herein lies the importance of the material from psychedelic therapy. It is the most extreme and dramatic example of the challenge that the research of non-ordinary states of consciousness presents to traditional Newtonian-Cartesian science. Systematic and open-minded study of the evidence amassed by this work strongly suggests the need for a radical revision of our basic ideas about the human psyche and the nature of consciousness. It would lead to an entirely different understanding of emotional and psychosomatic disorders, as well as the therapeutic process and strategy of self-exploration. Some of the observations from non-ordinary states would require not only revision of our ideas about the human psyche, but of the traditional beliefs about the nature of reality. An extreme example of this kind is the ability of individuals in near-death situations to accurately perceive, without the use of their senses, not only the immediate environment, but also various remote locations. Observations of this kind seriously question the most fundamental metaphysical assumptions of Western philosophy of science. . . .

LSD is a unique and powerful tool for the exploration of the human mind and human nature. Psychedelic experiences mediate access to deep realms of the psyche that have not yet been discovered and acknowledged by mainstream psychology and psychiatry. They also reveal new possibilities and mechanisms of therapeutic change and personality transformation. The fact that the spectrum of the LSD experience appears puzzling to most professionals and cannot be accounted for by the existing

theoretical frameworks does not mean that the effects of LSD are totally unpredictable. The safe and effective use of this drug requires a fundamental revision of the existing theory and practice of psychotherapy. However, it is possible to formulate basic principles for LSD-assisted psychotherapy which maximize its therapeutic benefits and minimize the risks.

It is very difficult at this point to predict the future of LSD psychotherapy. The fact that it can be used safely and effectively does not automatically mean that it will be assimilated by mainstream psychiatry. This issue is complicated by many factors of an emotional, administrative, political and legal nature. However, we should clearly differentiate between the future of LSD psychotherapy and its contribution to the theory and practice of psychiatry. LSD is a catalyst or amplifier of mental processes. If properly used it could become something like the microscope or the telescope of psychiatry. Whether LSD research continues in the future or not, the insights that have been achieved in LSD experimentation are of lasting value and relevance.

The theoretical formulations and practical principles that LSD psychotherapy has discovered or validated include a new, expanded cartography of the human mind, new and effective therapeutic mechanisms, a new strategy of psychotherapy, and a synthesis of spirituality and science in the context of the transpersonal approach. In addition, the recent rapid convergence between mysticism, modern consciousness research and quantum-relativistic physics suggests that psychedelic research could contribute in the future to our understanding of the nature of reality.

It is true that psychedelic experimentation has its dangers and pitfalls. But ventures into unexplored areas are never without risk. Wilhelm Conrad Roentgen, the discoverer of x-rays, lost his fingers as a result of his experiments with the new form of radiation. The mortality-rate of the early pilots who paved the way for today's safe jet travel was allegedly 75 percent. The degree of risk is directly proportional to the significance of the discovery, and its potential; thus the invention of gun powder involved a different level of risk from the development of nuclear energy. LSD is a tool of extraordinary power; after more than twenty years of clinical research I feel great awe in regard to both its positive and negative

potential. Whatever the future of LSD psychotherapy, it is important to realize that by banning psychedelic research we have not only given up the study of an interesting drug or group of substances, but also abandoned one of the most promising approaches to the understanding of the human mind and consciousness.

The present prospects for systematic LSD research and its extensive use in psychotherapy look rather grim. It is difficult at this point to say whether or not the situation will change, though there are indications that the general climate might become more favorable in the years to come.

One of the major problems in LSD psychotherapy was the unusual nature and content of the psychedelic experience. The intensity of the emotional and physical expression characteristic of LSD sessions was in sharp contrast to the conventional image of psychotherapy, with its face-to-face discussions or disciplined free-associating on the couch. The themes of birth, death, insanity, ESP, cosmic unity, archetypal entities, or past-incarnation memories occurring in psychedelic states were far beyond the conventional topics of psychotherapy which emphasized biographical data. An average professional at that time felt reluctance toward or even fear of the experiential realms of this kind because of their association with psychosis. At present, intense emotional outbursts, dramatic physical manifestations, and various perinatal and transpersonal experiences are much more acceptable to and less frightening for many therapists because they can be encountered quite routinely in the context of the new experiential therapies, such as Gestalt practice, encounter groups, marathon and nude marathon sessions, primal therapy, and various neo-Reichian approaches. Many modern therapists value and encourage various dramatic experiences which in the framework of classical analysis would be seen as dangerous acting-out and considered a reason for discontinuation of treatment or even psychiatric hospitalization. Some modern approaches to schizophrenia actually encourage deep experiential immersion into the process instead of its chemical inhibition. For new therapists of the above orientation, psychedelics would naturally be the next step to help accelerate and deepen the process.

LSD entered the scene at the time of the psychopharm-

acological revolution, when new tranquilizers and anti-depressants had their early triumphs and generated excessive hope for easy chemical solutions to most of the problems in psychiatry. At present much of the original enthusiasm in this area has tapered off. While appreciating the humanization of the mental hospitals and pacification of psychiatric wards which has brought their atmosphere close to that of general hospitals, it is becoming increasingly obvious that tranquilizers and antidepressants are, by and large, only symptomatic remedies. They do not solve the problems and in more serious cases lead to a life-long dependence on maintenance medication. In addition, there is an increasing number of professional papers that emphasize the dangers of massive use of these drugs—irreversible neurological symptoms of tardive dyskinesia, degenerative changes in the retina, or actual physiological addiction with a withdrawal syndrome.

We should also mention important social forces that might play a role in the future changes of policy toward psychedelic research. Many of the young persons who are in or will be moving into various positions of social relevance—as lawyers, teachers, administrators, or mental health professionals—had intense exposure to psychedelics during their student years. Those individuals who had experiences themselves, or had the opportunity to observe the process in close friends and relatives, will have formed an independent image and will not be dependent on second-hand sources for information. Elements of sanity in the new marijuana laws in many states may be the first fruits of this development. The fact that ritualized and responsible use of psychedelics received social sanction in some ancient societies and pre-industrial countries and was meaningfully woven into the social fabric represents a somewhat hopeful precedent.