

On Travels in the Universe of the Soul: Reports on Self-Experiments with Delysid (LSD) and Psilocybin (CY)[†]

RUDOLF GELPKE*

D-lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD-25, also called Delysid®) was discovered by Dr. Albert Hofmann in the research laboratories of the firm Sandoz (Basel), in the year 1943. LSD is a semisynthetic drug — the bulk of its molecule is a product of the ergot fungus — that acts on the human psyche even in the unprecedentedly low dose of from 0.03-0.05 milligrams, while mescaline (the active principle of the peyotl cactus), the similar and much earlier known vision-producing drug, generally does this only with the 10,000-times greater quantity of from 0.3-0.5 grams.

The second of our drugs, psilocybin (CY-39 or Indocybin®), is the active principle of the Mexican magic mushroom *teonanácatl* (minimum dose 3-5 mg), likewise isolated in the Sandoz laboratories in 1958 by A. Hofmann and his colleagues.

[†]Translated by Jonathan Ott from "Von Fahrten in den Weltraum der Seele: Berichte über Selbstversuche mit Delysid (LSD) und Psilocybin (CY)," published in *Antaios*, Vol. III, No. 5: 393-411, January 1962, under the editorship of Mircea Eliade and Ernst Jünger. Please address reprint requests to: Jonathan Ott, P.O. Box 273, Vashon, Washington 98070.

*Rudolf Gelpke (1928-1972) was an Islamic scholar of Swiss nationality. After taking his doctorate in Islamic studies from the University of Basel in 1957, Gelpke held positions at the University of Teheran and the University of Bern, and was for a year (September 1962 to May 1963) an Associate Professor at UCLA. After living in Teheran for eight years as a freelance writer, Gelpke returned to Switzerland, where he died of a stroke in Lucerne at the age of 43. Besides this paper, Gelpke published a book on this topic: *Vom Rausch im Orient und Okzident* (On Inebriation in the East and the West), Ernst Klett Verlag, Stuttgart, 1966.

The dramatic course of the first LSD experiment by the discoverer Hofmann has been described impressively at first hand (in the periodical *Triangel*, 3/II, Basel, 1955), and we also possess from the same author an account of a self-experiment with *teonanácatl* (in *Chimia*, 14/1960).¹

During my studies and travels in Iran (1958 and 1960), I had occupied myself, among other things, with the very important and hitherto little investigated roles that hashish and opium played, and still play, in the history of Persian thought (literature, mysticism, secret societies). I have therefore been able to collect numerous interesting experiences and much data, about which I will report in greater detail later. My studies in the Orient — and the possibilities of comparison which I sought — formed the exterior motive for my first visit with Dr. Hofmann on 29 March, 1961.

His trust and kind assistance — in connection with which I am obliged to Dr. Werner Hügin, director of the anaesthesia department of the Basel municipal hospital — have made it possible for me to conduct a total of 19 self-experiments with LSD and CY, as we may henceforth call these drugs for the sake of simplicity, in an interval of five months (beginning of April to beginning of September 1961). The dosage in the 10 LSD experiments varied at times from 0.050-0.175 mg, that in the nine CY experiments from 6-20 mg. The first three experiments took place in the home of Dr. Hügin and under his direction; the remaining 16 I subsequently carried out alone.

Indeed, the following reports of six of these

experiments need no detailed commentary — they speak for themselves. Nevertheless, I wish summarily and fundamentally to establish the following (see also the “Concluding Observation”):

1. Despite the short intervals between the individual experiments (April to July on an average of once a week), and despite the relatively very high doses (total of 1.125 mg LSD and 138 mg CY), I have been unable to identify any sign at all of addiction, organic injury, or other, in some way unpleasant aftereffects. The designation “narcotics” (Rauschgifte) is completely out of place for this type of drug.

2. In my opinion, however, LSD and CY cannot and should not become “pleasure drugs” (Genussmitteln) for the general public. Their effects are such that they lead one beyond the customary (and constraining) coordinate system of space and time, and afford insights into the heaven and hell of one’s own self — which can be dangerous to one who is not cut out for that, and hence is not prepared.

3. According to my experience, only several repeated experiments afford a serious appraisal. I also believe that at least one of these experiments should be undertaken in familiar surroundings (under discreet supervision of a trusted person) and with higher doses. *Only* then might the drug show us its, and our, deepest secret.

WHERE TIME STANDS STILL

Experiment 1 (10 mg CY on 6 April, 10:20)

After circa 20 minutes beginning effects: serenity, speechlessness, mild but pleasant dizzy sensation and “pleasureful deep breathing” (reminding me of similar symptoms after smoking hashish).

10:50 — “strong! dizziness, can no longer concentrate . . .”

10:55 — “excited; intensity of colors: everything pink to red . . .”

11:05 — “The world concentrates itself there on the center of the table. Colors very intense.”

11:10 — “Cleft being, unprecedented” — “how can I describe this sensation of life? Waves, different selves, must control me . . .”

Immediately after this note I proceeded outdoors from the breakfast table, where I had eaten with Dr. H and our wives, and lay down there on the lawn. The inebriation pushed rapidly to its climax. Although I had firmly undertaken to make constant notes, that now seemed to me purely a “waste of time,” the motion of writing as infinitely slow, the possibilities of verbal expression as unspeakably paltry — measured by the

flood of inner experience that inundated me and threatened to “burst” me. It seemed to me that 100 years would not be sufficient to describe the fullness of experience of a single minute. At the outset, it was mostly optical impressions that predominated: I saw with delight the “boundless succession” of rows of trees in the nearby forest; then the tattered clouds in the sunny sky rapidly piled up with silent and breathtaking majesty to a superimposition of thousands of layers — “heaven on heaven” — and I awaited then, that there above in the next instant something completely powerful, unheard of, not yet existing, would appear or happen (“would I behold a god?”) — but only the expectation remained, the presentiment, the “on the threshold of the ultimate” feeling . . . Then I went on still further (the proximity of others disturbed me) and lay down in a nook of the garden on a sun-warmed woodpile — my fingers stroked this wood with overflowing, “animal-like sensual” affection. At the same time I sank within; it was an absolute climax: a sensation of bliss pervaded me, a contented happiness — I found myself behind my closed eyes in a cavity full of brick red ornaments, and at the same time in the “center of the universe of consummate calm.” I knew: everything was good — the *cause* and origins of everything was good. But at the same moment I also understood the suffering and the loathing, the depression and misunderstanding of “everyday life”: there one is never “total,” rather divided, cut in pieces, and split up in the tiny fragments of seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks and years: there one is a slave of Moloch time, that devoured one piecemeal; one is condemned to stammering, bungling and patchwork; one must drag about with oneself the perfection and absolute, the togetherness of all things; the eternal moment of the golden age, the original ground of being — that indeed ever endured and ever will endure — “there” in the weekday of human existence, as a tormenting thorn buried deeply in the soul, as a memorial of a claim never fulfilled, as a Fata Morgana of a lost and promised paradise; through this feverish dream “present” to a condemned “past” in a clouded “future.” I understood. This inebriation was a space flight, not of the outer, but rather of the inner man, and for a moment I experienced reality from a location that lies somewhere beyond the force of gravity of time.

As I began again to feel this force of gravity, I was childish enough to wish to postpone the return, by taking in addition a new dose of 6 mg psilocybin at 11:45, and once again 4 mg at 2:30 p.m. The effect was trifling, and in any case not worthy of mention.

POLYP FROM THE DEEP

Experiment 3 (0.150 mg LSD on 15 April, 9:15)

Already the beginning of the effect after about 30 minutes with strong inner agitation, trembling hands, skin chills, "taste of metal" on the palate.

10:00 — "The environment of the room transforms itself into phosphorescent waves, that run hither from the feet all through my body. The skin — and above all the toes — is as electrically charged; a still constantly growing excitement hinders all clear thoughts . . ."

10:20 — "I lack the words to describe my current condition. It is as if an "other" complete stranger were seizing possession of me bit by bit. Have greatest trouble writing ('inhibited' or 'uninhibited?' — I don't know!)."

This sinister process of an advancing self-estrangement aroused in me the feeling of powerlessness, of being helplessly delivered up. Around 10:30 I saw through closed eyes innumerable, self-intertwining threads on a red background. A sky as heavy as lead appeared to press down on everything; I felt my ego "compressed in itself," and I felt "like a withered dwarf . . ."

Around 11:00 a change set in. This experiment also took place in the home of Dr. W.H. (who was also participant and "role assigner") and we found ourselves at this moment — it was raining hard outside — in the high, broad, spacious studio of Mrs. D.H., with numerous abstract oil paintings, outlines and sketches all around us. The aspect of these pictures, for which I have a strong affinity even at other times, cheered me greatly. I "watched them," in the literal sense, for they breathed incessantly like living beings, whereby their colors and forms moved about and got out of place, as though they experimented with themselves, or as if they endeavored to be mirrors of my feelings and impressions. On this day a significant role was also played by a child present in the studio, who drew there and did not want to leave us. On the one hand, we were constantly aware of the responsibility (which the schizophrenia caused by the inebriation yet heightened, in the form of scruples and guilt feelings) to keep our "abnormal" condition secret from the child as much as possible; on the other hand, however, the so frequently observed tendency toward "experience of minutiae" and a "return to childhood" in LSD inebriation was apparently furthered in us three adults — most conspicuously in my wife, who began to converse and to draw again like a child, while she also with characteristic simultaneity, experienced the most strongly and excruciatingly of us three, the already-

mentioned reaction of moral schism (shame and guilty conscience).

Shortly before 1:00 I escaped the more and more oppressing atmosphere of the company in the studio, where we only hindered one another reciprocally from "unfolding" completely into the inebriation. I sat down in a small, empty room, on the floor, with my back to the wall, and saw through the only window on the narrow frontage opposite me a bit of grey-white cloudy sky. This, like the whole environment in general, appeared to be "hopelessly normal" at this moment. I was dejected, and my self seemed so repulsive and hateful to me, that I had not dared (and on this day had even repeatedly, desperately avoided) to look in a mirror or in the face of another person. I very much wished this inebriation were finally finished, but it still had my body totally in its possession. I seemed to perceive, deep within its stubborn, oppressive weight, how it held my limbs surrounded with a hundred polyp arms — yes, I actually experienced this in a mysterious rhythm, "electrified" contacts, as of a real, indeed imperceptible, but sinister, omnipresent being, that I addressed with a loud voice, reviled, bid and challenged to "open combat" . . . "It is only the projection of evil in your self," another voice assured me, "it is your soul monster!" This perception was like a flashing sword. It passed through me with redeeming sharpness. The polyp arms fell away from me — as if cut through — and simultaneously the hitherto so dull and gloomy grey-white of the sky behind the open window suddenly scintillated like sunlit water. As I stared at it so enchanted, it changed (for me!) to real water: a subterranean spring overran me, that had ruptured there all at once, and that now boiled up toward me, wanted to become a storm, a lake, an ocean, with millions and millions of drops — and on all of these drops, on every single one of them, the light danced . . .

As the room, window and sky came back into my consciousness (it was 1:25), the inebriation was certainly not at an end — not yet — but its rearguard, that passed by me during the ensuing two hours, very much resembled the rainbow that follows the storm.

While the psilocybin experiment of 6 April will remain in my memory as a unique, precipitous, lofty flight of sublime unity, this LSD experiment (in its own way just as memorable) showed me in all of its disunited ambiguity a small particle of the formerly concealed inner side of the individual soul.

THE HALL OF THE GODS

Experiment 5 (20 mg CY on 25 April, 12:30)

After the ingestion of this high dose, the trial of

which I had looked forward to for days, and for which I had prepared myself mentally, I eat a bite — in the company of my somewhat skeptical Li — listen to the news and the following light radio music, whose rhythm “occupies” me more and more. Suddenly I dance solo, feeling the surges of serenity mounting. My last note (shortly before 1:00), after which I had become incapable of further entries, runs: “Inebriated state — intensity of everything, especially in the periphery of the field of vision . . .” (the spirit of psilocybin jumps at its “victim” from behind or the side, it is never there, where one looks directly).

Almost suddenly, my room became “strange.” It was steeped completely in red, the objects in it had become remote to me, and yet at the same time had strangely sharp outlines; much as if I regarded them through an inverted telescope. And everything seemed to sway in the rhythm of a mysterious, airless wind.

I wanted to lie outside. Somewhat wearily I scaled the steps leading to the roof terrace, and dropped, on arriving above, in the deck chair, already set up. From there I could see the upper stories and rooftops of the neighboring house fronts — and above me besides, a rather large section of sky, in which an already powerful sun hung, which was traversed occasionally by one of the many cloud ships that populated the sphere in the greatest diversity of form, speed and altitude. During the next two hours (but time was indeed obliterated!) there was for me purely and simply this sky. But what a sky it was! It was a repetition of what I had already experienced on 6 April (Experiment 1) — but to such a degree as to have shocked me at the time: indeed, that had been nothing more than a foreboding and fleeting “sketch” of what today awaited me, and would overtake me with primeval force, uprooting me completely, throwing me into confusion, tearing me to pieces and putting me back together again, to nothing and to everything. Now — these are words, only words, I know. With them and through them, I have never succeeded in pushing forth to that monstrosity in sight (its name is “reality,” indeed, it must almost be!), to the brink of which the tidal wave of this drug has washed me.

In order to anticipate: I did *not* see the gods, although the sky was full of them. I saw their coronation hall, and I also saw the rotation of an unspeakable dome in the icy wind of eternity, and I saw the pendulum of the eternal clock, from animal sign to animal sign. I also saw the clouds above in the gaping abyss of the sky plunge in such a way as to become pillars in the hall. They were hung over and over with carved masks, and I could even examine these at leisure. To see the entry of the gods alone was denied me, and with reason; for

already the resounding silence that preceded this entry seized my heart with glacial fingers and squeezed me from the right and from beneath my easy chair with such dreadful force, that the terror itself petrified on my lips, before it could become a scream.

I did not even see Him, “my” god, who I called “the god of the hunt.” But he was constantly around me, and “I” said much to him — I? Was it then: I? I heard “me,” myself speak, but it was a strange voice, a monotone never heard before, mysterious, at once from longing and tenderness, a half-speaking, half-singing oracle’s voice, that continually repeated particular words like magic formulae — such as: “You . . . come to me . . . you . . . don’t leave me . . .” “Remoteness” was one of these constantly repeated words — “here” nonsense, “there” a magic key of great power. And the “there” had me completely in its power. Its dark waves carried me farther onward than ever before. Only rarely and briefly did I emerge, at times suddenly: then it happened with confused surprise that I noticed — as if I had been sleeping for a century in the meantime — the quite familiar row of houses beyond the square. In a second the memory of the usual mingled with the dream torrent, and this was stronger: all of the houses changed to ruined huts of an abandoned village “somewhere,” and from their facades the caricature of my own past stared at me wickedly — distorted into a vampiric grimace . . .

Again I sank beneath the flood. I saw “myself” again, and “I” was a small Indian boy with moccasins on his feet, and with a skin like leather and moss, who lay on a hide under the sky and spoke to his “god of the hunt” and I heard “him” say this to Him in his monotonous and strange singsong, that was mournful and affectionate like dark honey: “Tell me what is *hereafter* . . . what comes *hereafter* tell me . . .”

But the god was silent. Perhaps his silence was a great promise? Perhaps he thereby sealed the alliance? Perhaps he was silent, because he had to be silent? I didn’t know.

This inebriation came to a close shortly before 3:00 p.m. — and suddenly indeed, “like a thread that is broken with a single cut”; after it had unfolded an extraordinarily great and ever stronger intensity for almost exactly two hours (as far as I can estimate). Accordingly, I was confused and benumbed for about an hour; I could not assert that I had “understood” the experience — but even today the memory of it arouses “homesickness” in me. Naturally, I have hoped for and sought this magic dream in the six self-experiments with CY that have followed to the present (September), to pursue, and especially to meet the “god of the hunt”

again. Thus far I have not succeeded.

MINUTES OF THE METAMORPHOSES

Experiment 7 (0.150 mg LSD on 6 May, 2:05)

Alone in the house, as my wife has travelled to W. Shortly before 3:00, I take a bubble bath: I feel tired and at the same time filled with a faint "prickling" fear (foreboding?). I close my eyes momentarily underwater, and have the mental image of being a frost-bound whale in the arctic. Afterwards I suddenly see "everything white" for a moment, and a sentence that I recently read of Ernst Jünger occurs to me: "The senses had combined with the mind like colors with royal white . . ."

3:05 — "An hour after ingestion — no effect yet. Heavy head, depressed mood, work on a translation from Arabic."

3:45 — "My mood has improved. Still a headache, but now I perceive it as 'stimulating.' While working I must constantly struggle against a tendency to 'gaze': if I do not pay attention, I 'lose' sight of the roses on my desk, or the ornate Persian type on a gold background, which a friend had sent me recently. Sensation of 'inner fullness' . . ."

3:50 — "Still at the desk, I struggle against the first 'waves' of the inebriation. Great difficulty managing the Arabic dictionary — the letters become small, very acute and 'symmetrical' — 'aesthetic sensations' one could say. I must fight wearily to arrive at their 'meaning' . . ."

3:55 — "Normal again for a moment."

4:00 — "Now It has me and sways me . . . Heavy perspiration around the eyes. I force myself to write. But my movements grow stiff, freeze up, while 'things' begin to breathe . . ."

(This last sentence seems very important to me! LSD — as well as CY — in a certain sense produces a "topsy-turvy" world: it clothes the familiar manifestations of life as with an icy film, and in return awakens hitherto inanimate "things" to a strange, mysterious existence. Naturally, that is only *one* aspect.)

4:05 — "Like a swimmer I come up in the 'waves' (of the inebriation). If I do not look at my hand, it becomes colossal — if I stare at it, it again becomes small and fine. It is as though my sensuality were evenly spread over my whole skin and throughout my entire body."

4:10 — "A small thread on my trousers captures my undivided attention . . . Exhilarated mood, flood and flight of images (How can one describe that??). I look normal in the mirror."

4:20 — "I look at the sun outside. It is an abyss of white . . ."

4:25 — "I can scarcely concentrate. What I note down there, is *absolutely nothings*. I live a thousand lives at once. Search for cigarettes, smoke incessantly."

4:30 — "I check the clock at hand, although it has no more meaning for me . . . Now directly I find myself in a crystal; I forgot the cigarette in my mouth — then: like beneath quilted walls Radio music: songs from a magic land . . . 'green trees sing age old melodies . . . and hazy images ascend . . .'"

(I no longer know whether these words were sung on the radio. In the inebriation they were for me like codes or keys, perceived as completely real, behind which loomed innumerable transformations and boundless opportunities for adventure. Each word was merely a door, in some way, to infinity. It appears here, to be sure, that all of the "wavelengths" for which human language and writing have been created, are utterly forsaken in LSD or CY inebriation. Consequently, language and writing are a question merely of a sort of allegorical intimation of real experience. The laws of terrestrial gravity are suspended, even in the "inner universe" where these drugs lead! The "theory of relativity" must also be used here.)

5:25 — "Have written down nothing else . . . have been doing too much: a water sprite with scales, a snake . . . at once masculine and feminine and neither one nor the other — *more!*"

5:40 — "I was on the roof terrace and sought the 'god of the hunt' in the sky . . . the clouds 'buzzed' rather like helicopters but hushed, and they raised their sunny golden walls around me. Below, the Rümelinsplatz was a piazza somewhere in Italy. I can now get 'myself' back together again, and be objective (?), but it is only a 'role,' that I myself don't believe."

6:45 — "I listened to music again, and *had* to dance to it. Suddenly a sentence came to me: 'The flesh has its own spirit' (by Frank Wedekind). It's true, true, true! The dance of the snake goddess in 'quivering light' . . . dance: that means to dissolve into the music, never again to have an individual will, to be a marionette (a marionette of whom?). 'There are rites of unparalleled obscenity' (that occurred to me as a memory of the familiar world) — but *what* is 'obscene' in that?? This endless orgasm of every skin cell, when the body dissolves in 'resounding' twitches (are there 'memories' of 'life once lived'?)? . . ."

7:30 — "The 'secret of life' consists in 'switching'

and 'transforming' the energy of a manifestation into something else — that is: *immortality*. One can 'experience' that physically, as I have now done it. My *feet* become of greatest importance to me in the LSD inebriation (I don't like the word 'inebriation' [Rausch], but I know no other): they come to have an uncanny liveliness and 'consciousness' and move incessantly. Even the drug changes its 'manifestation': it sits at one time in the body and on the membrane, and it relinquishes this 'location' when it bestows visions"

9:15 — "The effect has now largely faded away. I lie in the darkness on the couch — in a sort of 'magnetic' semi-sleep. I feel well, only a little empty and drained."

EAGLE IN THE ICE AND REPTILE IN THE SUN

Experiment 13 (16 mg CY on 15 June, 5:45)

Ingestion of the drug in my home after a wakeful night. The early morning sky outside is cloudless. Around 6:15 I leave the house and stroll through the still empty streets and alleys to Münsterplatz, to the "palace," where I sit down on one of the benches near the rampart and enjoy the view of the Rhine, the Ufer of Kleinbasel, and the broad, golden fringe of the horizon.

At around 6:30 or somewhat later (my notebook lacks a more precise entry) perceptible, indeed, even rather strong, effects commence. To begin with, purely optical: the sky takes on different colors (dark blue, apple green, golden orange) that are often delineated sharply against one another. Then various houses over there in Kleinbasel fascinate me: they begin to move sluggishly (or even "furtively") — like primeval animals! — acquire faces, lie low "lurking" in the surrounding greenery, "observe" me I have to think of the Austrian painter Kubin, who represented such ("aha, thus he has . . ."). Twice I change places, even go along the ramparts at times, and there experience again the very same "sweet-pain," the all erotic and all blessed "atmosphere of early spring," that I had savored here on the palace during puberty, nearly 20 years ago

Sometime around 7:00 one of those very short sleeping fits with a "hypnotic" (or "magnetic") trance overtakes me, as I had typically experienced time and again with psilocybin: right before me I see a colossal, light dappled flag. Its color is orange-red-yellow, and it is evidently made of silk. Written — or better yet: inscribed — on this flag is a peculiar sign that I cannot decipher, an eagle's talon (I saw it alone, and only one). Furthermore, I suspect that I see (or possibly could, but I'm afraid), that concealed under the flag cloth he is

Dead

On awakening (the "sleep" could have lasted only minutes), I freeze deep within, as though there were a lump of ice there, or as if this dream had nourished itself on my "vital heat." I now perceive the already quite warm rays of the morning sun as a gift which fills me with the greatest gratitude. (I feel "like a reptile after hibernation.")

I detect the utmost indifference, yes, apathy, in the faces of the morning strollers at the palace, now becoming numerous. I only wish to be left in peace. Not, because I could not have engaged in conversation — I had still been at once capable of that — but because the "human world" (even my own everyday world) did not interest me in the slightest at the moment. Instead, I eavesdrop, enchanted, on the "whispering leaves" of the palace trees, and am persuaded that they wish to impart a "secret" to me.

Between 7:30 and 7:45 I wandered home via Freie Street and Barfüsserplatz. Meanwhile the drug played sundry tricks on me. At first I found it amusing, when I met a pedestrian who looked like a clothed hippopotamus, when a gorilla opened the safety lock on the door of his shop, or when a dignified man with a briefcase had legs like large matches, which he moved incredibly rapidly, but in diminutive little steps Soon I felt a mild paranoia. By this time, I no longer dared to look at people at all, I fancied, however, that *they* would look at *me* — and indeed, in by no means a friendly way. "Thus a wanted criminal feels," I thought — and even *was* one for a moment. Something like a "cold frenzy" welled up in me, which, however, I controlled effortlessly (like all of my reactions in general). I also experienced a singular delight in this stroll through the city (something of the sort: "How nice it is that no one knows my name is Rumpelstiltskin . . ."). Nevertheless I moved and behaved extremely circumspectly — for example, on crossing the street: "like a Martian, driven by a wretched fate to Basel," I thought somewhat grimly.

Again at home, I looked into the mirror and perceived about me a terror difficult to describe: my face in the glass was strange to me, a stiff symmetrical mask, exceedingly regular features, but eyes "like black stones," "snake eyes." — Then I lay down a bit (around 8:00). As I wrote in my notebook, the letters changed beneath my hands into a winter landscape: a field, behind woods and snow, very much snow over everything It seemed to me that my head became completely filled up with "a cold brightness," that I defined to myself as "crystallized evil." From now on I saw many images (without fear, "as though apathetic,

but not without curiosity"); like once: "a sky full of dreadful, empty parachutes" . . .

Finally I climbed up to the roof terrace and sat down on the deck chair in the sun ("be praised, O majesty Sun — how you do me well! . . ."). In conclusion, a "magnetic trance" seized me once again, but only its ending is clear: I dashed down an enormous staircase, thousands of red stairs, as though in flight "downstairs" (sent by some "head waiter" it seemed to me) — and awoke, not only from this trance, but from the inebriation as a whole.

It was 8:45 (exactly three hours after ingestion of CY). My mental and physical state after this experiment was extraordinarily good. I felt in a radiant mood, cheerfully ready, and full of an inner tension, with a pinch of "grim serenity" as a spicy additive. A certain basic impression — "I am a reptile, a lizard, and I enjoy the sun" — still persisted all day long, and since then even emerges now and again.

DANCE OF THE SPIRITS IN THE WIND

Experiment 14 (0.075 mg LSD on 23 June, 1:00)

After I had ingested this dose, that could be considered as "average" — the doubly large doses in experiments 3 and 7 are markedly high — I conversed very animatedly with a professional colleague until approximately 2:00. Following this, I proceeded alone to the "Werthmüller" bookstore, where the drug then distinctly began to act. There I discerned above all, that the content of the books in which I rummaged peacefully at the back of the shop was indifferent to me, whereas random details of my surroundings suddenly stood out strongly, and somehow appeared to be "meaning-full" . . . Then after some 10 minutes I was discovered by a married couple that I knew, and had to let myself become involved in a conversation with them that, I admit, was by no means pleasant to me, but also was not really painful. I listened to the conversation (even to myself) "as from far away." The things that were discussed (the conversation dealt with Persian stories that I had translated) "belonged to another world": a world about which I could indeed express myself (I had, after all, recently still inhabited it myself and remembered the "rules of the game"!), but to which I no longer possessed any emotional connection. My interest in it was obliterated — only I did not dare to let myself observe that.

After I managed to dismiss myself, I strolled further through the city and to the marketplace. I had no "visions," saw and heard everything as usual, but everything was also altered in an indescribable way; "imperceptible glassy walls" everywhere. With every step

that I took, I became more and more "like an automaton." It especially struck me that I seemed to lose control over my facial musculature — I was therefore convinced that my face had grown "stiff," completely expressionless, empty, slack and "mask-like." I could only still go, and move myself, because I *remembered* that, and how, I had "earlier" gone and moved myself. But the farther back the recollection went, the more uncertain I became. I remember that my own hands somehow were "in my way": I put them in my pockets, let them dangle, entwined them behind my back . . . like burdensome objects, that one must drag around with oneself, and doesn't rightly know how to stow away. With my whole body it happened thus to me. I no longer knew "why" it was there, and "whither" I should go with it. The sense for decisions of that type had been lost, and I had to reconstruct it only laboriously on the roundabout way over the "memories of earlier," even the short distance from the marketplace to my home, which I again entered about 3:10.

I had hitherto in no way had the feeling of being "inebriated." What I experienced was rather a gradual mental extinction. It was not at all frightening; but I can imagine that in the "transition" to certain mental disturbances — naturally dispersed over a greater interval — a very similar process happens: as long as the "recollection" of the former individual existence in the human world is still present, the patient who has become unconnected can still (to some extent) find his/her way about in the world; later, however, when the memories fade and ultimately die out, s/he completely loses this ability.

Shortly after I had entered my room, the "glassy stupor" gave way. I sat down, with a view out of a window, and was at once enraptured: the window sash was open wide, the diaphanous gossamer curtains on the other hand were drawn, and now a mild wind from the outside played with these veils and with the silhouettes of potted plants and leafy tendrils on the sill behind, that the sunlight delineated on the curtains breathing in the breeze. This spectacle captivated me completely. I "sank" into it, saw only this gentle and incessant waving and rocking of the plant shadows in the sun and the wind. I "knew" what "it" was, but I sought after the name for it, after the formula, after the "magic word" that I knew — and already I had it: Totentanz, the dance of the dead . . . That is what the wind and light showed me on the screen of gossamer. Was it frightening? Was I afraid? Perhaps — at first. But then a great cheerfulness infiltrated me, and I heard the music of silence, and even my soul danced with the redeemed shadows to the whistle of the wind. Yes, I understood: this is the

"curtain," and it itself, this curtain, is the secret, the "ultimate" that it conceals. Why, then, tear it up? He who does that only tears himself up. For "there behind," behind the curtain, is "nothing" . . .

CONCLUDING OBSERVATION

The attitude of individual persons regarding the phenomenon of "inebriation" is largely determined by the taboos of his/her society. Thus alcohol is a pleasure drug for us in the West; for the Moslem on the other hand, it is "abominable devil's work" (*Koran* V, 92). Conversely, among us the enjoyment of hashish is judged a criminal offense; while to this day a Persian mystic regards the smoking of a "mounted" water pipe ("you go on foot," he says of it, if it contains merely tobacco alone) as a perfectly legal expedient, for better and more rapidly attaining the sought after condition of inner immersion. The discussions of health apostles on the perniciousness of this, that, or another "intoxication"² is not only stupid (in a transitory world), it is also — consciously or unconsciously — deceitful. What person in this era, whose political and technological delusions (even in "peacetime") sacrifice imponderable millions of human lives, has the moral right to speak of the "bad example" and the "corruption of morals" that proceed from wine-drinking priests, hashish-smoking Sufis or mushroom-eating Indian priests? And yet it is done.

It must be repeated explicitly here once again, that Delysid® (LSD-25) and psilocybin (CY-39), the topics of this article, are *not* "narcotics." Repeated ingestion of them alone does *not* lead to addiction and physical or mental ruin, which the regular and improper use of alcohol, hashish, opium or cocaine brings. This important advantage has been fittingly appraised by Aldous Huxley (in *The Doors of Perception* 1954) on the basis of his self-experiments with the older, closely related mescaline. But LSD and CY do not even cause the "first phase" of physical malaise typical of mescaline. Why, therefore, is the greatest circumspection nevertheless appropriate in connection with these drugs?

The answer will not surprise the reader of the preceding reports: travels in the "mental universe" are just as strange, and dangerous too, as those in "outer space" (one should not mistake this for "poetic metaphor" which it isn't!). The physicists and astronauts of one correspond to the chemists and experimenters of the other, whereas the role of the physician remains approximately the same in both cases: namely, s/he has to

determine what may be expected from a given organism. This judgment can only be arrived at individually, from case to case.

LSD and CY have hitherto been studied principally concerning possibilities of their use in psychiatry, which addresses, however, only one, to be sure very important, aspect of the problem. Moreover, the effects that such substances could have on the religious, philosophical, artistic and, in the broadest sense, existential perspective — namely: "an influx of spirit and perceptions," "a new creative cycle" (Gottfried Benn in "Provoziertes Leben" 1943)³ — should no longer remain unexplored and unfathomed. My self-experiments represent a small contribution in this direction. After my aptitude for this had been established objectively under medical supervision, I myself bore the responsibility for the continuation of the experiment alone. This concerns especially the two "excursions" in the city (Experiments 13 and 14). I undertook them only when I already knew very precisely the nature of my reactions. Nevertheless, let potential critics be advised in advance, that there can be no question of "complicity" on behalf of Dr. Hofmann and Dr. Hügin.

Self-experiments with LSD and CY — as Ernst Jünger says in characterization of the "log book" of his Antonio Peri,⁴ a man driven by "curiosité surnaturelle" — are "Travels, about which one can report." One *should* also report about them. The report is the justification for the journey, for every journey, whether it leads without or within. Even when the possibility of mistaking friend and foe is as exceedingly great as it is here, the problem still presents itself. We must approach it in full consciousness of the absurd, and indeed also grotesque schism, that consists in that we are damned endlessly to seek infinity in human creations. We do it even in the spirit of the sentence, memorable to me, with which Philipp Wolff-Windegg concludes his book *Die Gekrönten* (1958): "It is a work of danger and self-jeopardy: nobody knows whether the treasure that he thinks he will collect will crumble to dust the instant he begins to weigh and to count it, just as the jewel of paradise of Alexander the Great, which all the world's gold could not equal, weighed less than a downy feather, like the dust of the worldly that it concerned."

Nobody knows. But no one and nothing can stop us from hoping that it were *not* so. To live and to die, as if it were not so.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

1. Hofmann has recently published a detailed account of the discoveries of LSD and psilocybin: *LSD: Mein Sorgenkind* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta 1979). An English translation by Jonathan Ott of this book *LSD: My Problem Child* (New York: McGraw-Hill 1980) is now available. The first chapter of this translation, "How LSD Originated," has been previewed in the *Journal of Psychedelic Drugs*, Vol. 11(1-2): 53-60, 1979. Hofmann had earlier published an account in English of his first experiments with *teonanácatl* and LSD in Chapter 7 of *Discoveries in Biological Psychiatry*, edited by F.J. Ayd and B. Blackwell (Philadelphia: Lippincott 1970). Hofmann's account of his experiment with *teonanácatl* is also found in his chapter of *Teonanácatl: Hallucinogenic Mushrooms of North America*, edited by J. Ott and J. Bigwood (Seattle: Madrona 1978).

2. While in this sentence Gelpke surely meant "intoxication," I have elsewhere in this paper translated *Rausch* as "inebriation," a nice distinction in the English language, of which I'm sure Gelpke would have availed himself, had it a counterpart in German. "Intoxication" and "intoxicant" (from Latin *toxicum*, poison), like

"Rausch" and "Rauschmittel" in German, are pejorative epithets. Note Gelpke's dislike of the term in the section "Minutes of the Metamorphoses." On the other hand, the sense of the earliest citation (1526) for "inebriation" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is apposite: "This inebriacyon or heuenly dronkenness of the spiryte . . ."

3. A translation of this paper, "Provoked Life: An Essay on the Anthropology of the Ego," has been published by Ralph Metzner in the premiere issue of *Psychedelic Review* Vol. 1(1): 47-54, 1963.

4. Peri, a drug researcher who "went on voyages of discovery in the universe of his brain," is the protagonist of Ernst Jünger's *Heliopolis: Rückblick auf eine Stadt* (1949). Jünger, Albert Hofmann's long-time friend and collaborator, based the character loosely on the life of the famous discoverer of LSD. Jünger has also published a personal account of self-experiments with entheogenic drugs, some undertaken in collaboration with Rudolf Gelpke and Albert Hoffman, entitled *Annäherungen – Drogen und Rausch (Approaches – Drugs and Inebriation)* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett 1970).