

Books

LSD

LSD: My Problem Child—Reflections on Sacred Drugs, Mysticism, and Science, by Albert Hofmann (Jonathan Ott, trans). 210 pp. with illus. paper. \$7.95. Los Angeles, JP Tarcher; Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. distributor, 1983.

Along with watches and cuckoo clocks, the Swiss produce drugs. They have been doing it for a long time—since Paracelsus of Basel, a contemporary of Columbus.

On April 16, 1943, another Basel chemist, Albert Hofmann, was working in his laboratory at Sandoz. His specialty was ergot, a fungus that grows on grains. Starting with lysergic acid, the ergot nucleus, Hofmann had synthesized several medically useful drugs that made Sandoz a great deal of money. On this fateful day, while working with the 25th substance in his series of lysergic acid derivatives (LSD-25), Hofmann began to feel odd. "I sank into a not unpleasant intoxicated-like condition," he writes, and perceived an "uninterrupted stream of fantastic pictures, extraordinary shapes with intense, kaleidoscopic play of colors."

Unwittingly, not knowing how he had absorbed the stuff, Hofmann had just taken the first LSD trip. Sandoz, alas, would not make a franc.

Later Hofmann went back to the lab and deliberately ingested a tiny amount of LSD-25. Starting to hallucinate, he got on his bicycle to ride the four miles home, not a recommended pursuit. The next day he had a feeling of extraordinary serenity: "Breakfast tasted delicious . . . everything glistened and sparkled in a fresh light. The world was as if newly created. . . ."

Now, 40 years later, Hofmann peers out from the cover of his book looking as he might have looked that morning: serene, radiant, as if he had just returned from a hair-raising journey and was glad to be home. The 40-year journey had indeed been hair-raising: for Hofmann, Sandoz, and the several million LSD-users whose voyages into "inner space" ranged from ecstatic to fatal.

The LSD story is well known. Sandoz made LSD-25 available for research to "release repressed emotions" and suggested that psychiatrists take LSD to "gain insight." Through the 1950s, psychiatrists did just this, trying LSD on themselves, giving it to patients, and writing up

the results. The results, often as not, were published in the lay press under headlines like "My Twelve Hours as a Madman" and "The Curious Story Behind the New Cary Grant." (Grant's psychiatrist had given him LSD.) Then came flower children, long hair, laws, judges, busts, riots, Vietnam, and Woodstock. LSD was no longer respectable, a research tool of great promise, but part of the counter culture, and that was the end of research. In 1965, Sandoz announced the drug would no longer be available.

Hofmann later synthesized psilocybin, the active principal of hallucinogenic mushrooms, and now this became part of the drug culture. He then made a truly remarkable discovery, namely, that morning glory seeds contained lysergic acid amide, a compound he had synthesized in his Basel laboratory 25 years before!

Hofmann's synthesis of psilocybin was perhaps his proudest achievement: "The compounds whose wondrous effect led the Indians to believe for millennia that a god was residing in the mushrooms . . . could be produced synthetically in a flask!" He believes Mexican art was influenced by hallucinogens, because people who are unfamiliar with Mexican art have visions astonishingly similar to Mexican art when eating the mushrooms.

A particularly poignant story concerns Hofmann's friend Aldous Huxley. On the day Huxley died of cancer of the throat, he was so weak he could no longer speak but had written on a sheet of paper: "LSD—try it—intramuscular—100 mmg." Mrs Huxley ignored the misgivings of the attending physician and gave the injection. He died serenely and peacefully.

Sandoz discarded LSD because it was too controversial and the medicinal effects had been disappointing; as an adjunct to psychotherapy it had certainly been a disappointment. But LSD may be a blessing for some dying patients—there is evidence for this. Perhaps Sandoz should reopen the case.

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Neurology

An Atlas of Clinical Neurology, by John D. Spillane and John A. Spillane, ed 3; 470 pp. with illus. \$49.50. New York, Oxford University Press, 1982.

This book is a personal overview of clinical neurological syndromes, with all the faults and virtues that implies. Photographs in the *Atlas* are from the personal collection of the senior

author, and their number and variety suggest the staggering richness of clinical experience that the authors bring to this book. The text is a ramble through clinical neurology, with some chapters arranged according to body part ("The Head and Neck") and others by specific diagnosis ("Syringomyelia," and "Neurosyphilis"). The text is discursive and not always relevant to photographs, and the selection of some material seems capricious. For example, there is a long discussion of hypothyroidism but none of hyperthyroidism; pictures of the latter are, however, included. Some of the pictures selected are odd, for instance, pictures of normal-appearing people with neurological disease, apparently included simply for their outward normality.

The book's virtues, however, far outweigh its faults. The quality of the photographs is uniformly excellent and most of the examples are well chosen. The authors even manage to illustrate movement disorders suggestively with their still pictures. The captions, which are brief synopses of the cases illustrated, are concise and vivid. The text is accurate and informative and includes canny clinical observations of the kind usually available only on a good ward round.

The book would be a good review for the neurology or neurosurgery resident preparing for boards. It might also prove a lively introduction for the first-year resident in neurology or neurosurgery. The medical student doing neurology should also find the text enjoyable and a painless way of learning solid clinical material. It is highly recommended.

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Pathology

Principles and Practice of Surgical Pathology, 2 vol. edited by Steven G. Silverberg. 1,856+ pp. with illus. \$140. New York, John Wiley & Sons Inc. 1983.

This two-volume reference text for residents and practitioners in pathology is intended to provide a "thorough and authoritative" survey of surgical pathology in a practical way, difficult as that is to define. It is the work of 85 authors, "most of whom have written recent monographs or major review articles" on their topics, plus the "unreasonable and arbitrary" editor. Because practical works need to be handy, each volume of roughly 850 pages weighs in at a mean of 2,380 g and is about 23-cm square; readers may judge this in

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